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the TRAVELLERS' Digest

Number 16

Danger and Intrigue
from William W. Connors

Twice Confounded
Classic Traveller Adventure

Sword of Arthur
MegaTraveller Adventure

MegaTraveller
Beginner's Luck
Finding Players

Gaming Digest
Aspects of Culture

2300AD
The Tula-class Frigate

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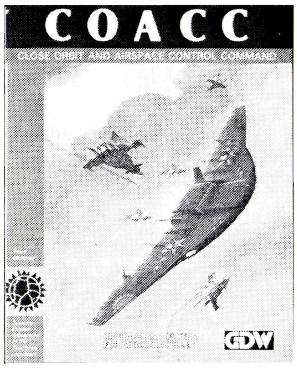

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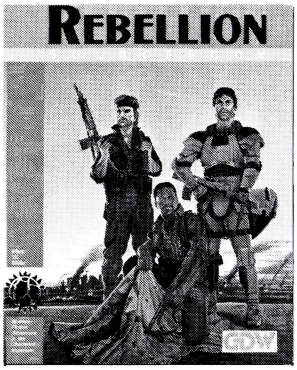

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AGAINST this background, it was inevitable for some small stimulus to trigger the fall of the Imperium. And once that happened, there was no turning back.

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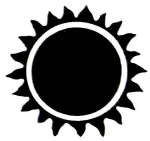

The Imperium began as a small pocket of scientific and technological innovation in a sea of primitive star systems. It reached out to eventually take over more than 10,000 systems. In the course of a thousand years, it fought countless wars and conquered countless races. But after that thousand years, the Imperium is old, tired, and strained at the borders by dissention and civil unrest.

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The Imperium has shattered...

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Twice Confounded

"Perhaps the most tragic aspect of the demise of the Ancients civilization is the fact that it was a suicide."

— Akidda Laagiir, from "Fratricide" in the *Travellers' Digest*, 1111 .

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Editors' Digest

FROM THE DESKS OF GARY L. THOMAS AND JOE D. FUGATE SR.

With everyone busily hammering away on the keyboards for our upcoming products, the Editors' Digest (more accurately "the Editor's Digest", this time around) has fallen in my (Rob Caswell's) lap. However, the surprises don't stop there....read on! Read on!

After *World Builder's Handbook* (now available at your favorite game or hobby store), we are doing the first installment in our new "Campaign Sourcebook" line. Giving you both adventures and background material aplenty to keep an extended MegaTraveller campaign going, (ala, *The Traveller Adventure* by GDW), these 96-page books each involve a different one of the Shattered Imperium's factions.

The first book, titled *The Black Duke,* is set in the Federation of Illelish: Dulinor's Realm. It's 1120 and the hope of reuniting the Third Imperium has all but vanished. The player characters are treated to a tour of Illelish, as they sign on with a large merchant vessel to make enough money to repair their own, ailing free trader. Strange locales, fascinating personalities, and exciting adventure situations fill this look at Dulinor's power base from the inside.

But the adventuring hardly stops there! You won't want to miss next issue, for we visit Kuzyu, the Aslan homeworld, and uncover one of the biggest surprises since Strephon's assasination! Written by none other than William H. Keith, Jr., we're convinced it's one of our richest feature adventures to date!

There are yet more surprises. Next year, MicroProse will be releasing *The Zhodani Conspiracy*: a graphics-oriented computer game set in the Spinward Marches. We'll give you more details as they become available.

The results of the latest Survey Sweepstakes are just in. We appreciate the vote of approval from most of you about increasing our price. We started out a digest-sized black and white booklet and have grown to a full-fledged magazine with over twice the amount of material and color covers — and keeping the same $3.95 cover price! Our palm wringing accountant says it's time to bring our price back in line (as you can see by the cover price on this issue). As always, our pledge to bring you the best and the most MegaTraveller support. Once again, thanks for your vote of confidence and approval.

For those of you who couldn't make it out to L.A.'s ORIGINS this year, you can catch some of us at the following East Coast SF/gaming conventions:

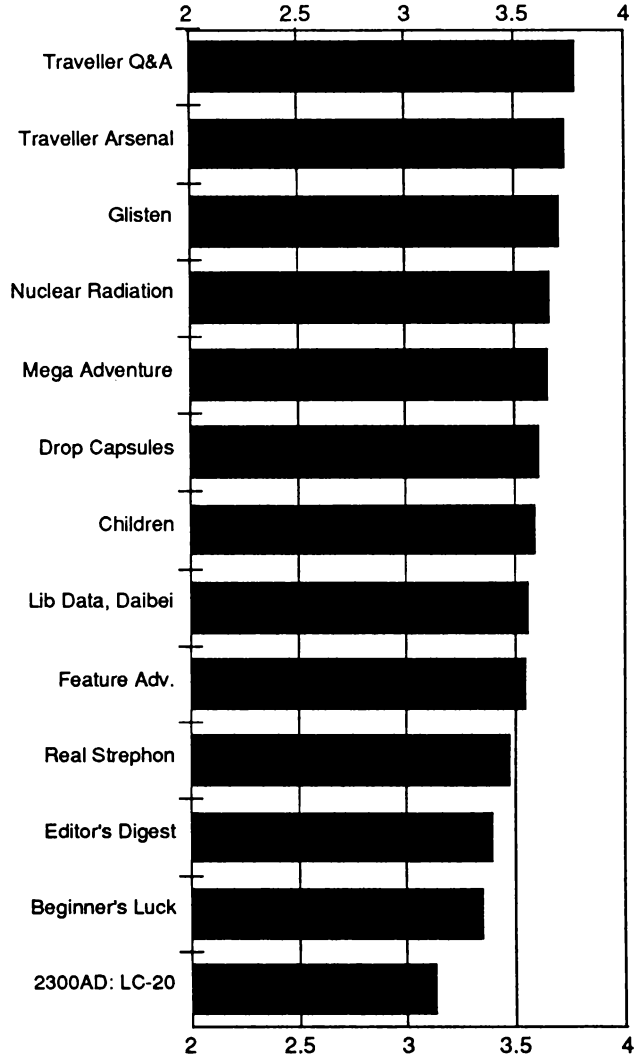
Noreascon 3 (Aug.31-Sept.4, Sheraton-Boston, Boston, MA): We will be here "unofficially", though we may be able to sneak into the programming.

Notjustanothercon 5 (Oct.20-22, Campus Ctr. Hotel, Amherst, MA): Hopefully we'll be in the programming and sponsoring prizes for MegaTraveller events.

ARISIA (Feb.23-25 '90, Lafayette Hotel, Boston, MA): We have been confirmed for programming and will likely be sponsoring prizes.

Lastly, a few questions. Do you draw? Are you familiar with the look of the universe of MegaTraveller? Would you like to do work for publication? If you answered yes to these three, then we'd like to encourage you to do illustration for Digest Group Publications! Just send us a few non-returnable, photocopied samples of your work and a SASE and we'll send a reply and copy of our artists' guidelines. You've got nothing to lose, except your anonymity! —Rob Caswell

Here are the results from the survey sweepstakes in TD15:



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(many respondents who picked option 1 listed option 4 as their second choice)

We had a total of 41 responses.

AKIDDA LAAGIIR, JOURNALIST

STATS:
858AAB age 47 6 terms Cr 21,000
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Admin–1, Brawling-1, Computer-0
Holocrystal Recorder
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 319-1059

Position: Current recipient of the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda Laagiir started at age 18 as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review*; his friendly face and ability to gain the trust of others contributed to his steady career progress.

Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness (especially in interview situations) has also contributed favorably to his career.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to a strange locale or culture — a skill that has saved his neck on more than one occasion.

Like most writers, he is consumed with curiosity, and when the *Travellers' Digest* journalism contest was held again in 1098, he was among the first to apply. His piece was entitled "The Imperial Frontier: The Next Millenium". In it, he discussed the spinward frontier sectors of Deneb, Spinward Marches, Trojan Reach, and Reft as well as their role in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1,000 years. On 258-1099, he received the announcement that he had won the coveted *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda has been travelling and submitting articles of his travels for over seven years.

Roleplaying Notes: Akidda's strong interview skill indicates he has a real nose for a good story: to play him otherwise would be untrue to his character. His natural curiosity makes him likely to pursue "trouble" rather than run from it.

The counterbalance to Akidda's tendency to seek out such trouble is his streetwise skill, which enables him to lessen the harmful results of an otherwise awkward situation. His streetwise skill may enable him to "stumble" onto a valuable source of information the others would overlook.

Keeping this in mind, the referee should use the NPCs encountered by Akidda as those with the most valuable information to the group, as a result of Akidda's abilities. Akidda's phenomenal interview-5 skill gives him tremendous insight when dealing with people.

DUR TELEMON, EX-SCOUT

STATS:
A7A85B age 40 3 terms Cr10,000
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gambling-1, Brawling-1, Computer-1, Vacc Suit-0 Auto Pistol
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 038-1068

Position: Ex-Scout (on reserve status).

Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout Service. His father was in the Scout Service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure.

The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager — his father's service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family and deepened Dur's love for the Scouts.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a respect and friendship between the two men over the years.

Dur's second and third terms were spent in District 268 and Five Sisters Subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. During these surveys, Dur learned much about staying alive and living off the land in unusual environments. Halfway through his fourth term, he was transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support.

Dur has resigned from the Scouts and has been travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagiir.

Roleplaying Notes: Dur is the brash adventurer of the group and as such he is the least likely to fear physical confrontations or physical discomfort. He is also the most likely of the group to act without giving due consideration to the consequences. He has genuine concern for others and is the most likely to risk his life to save someone.

DR. THEODOR KRENSTEIN, SCIENTIST

STATS:
485FCB age 64 10 terms Cr 300,000
Robotics-5, Leader-3, Electronics-2, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1
Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic Tool Kit,
Robot AB-101
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 173-1043

Position: Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology — on sabbatical leave.

Dr. Theodor Krensteim is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the "ologies" inbetween.

Born on the planet Rhylanor, he entered the Rhylanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and roboticsl. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at RIT, after which he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computaational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position He is the author of 12 holocrystal publications and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial military patents for his inventions and robotics work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored with what he has been doing, and realizing his age, took an extended sabbatical from teaching in order to make forays through Deneb Sector.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scouts in developing robots for planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnaped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout Service didn't meet their demands. A young Scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the doctor.

After this incident, the doctor constructed his servant, bodyguard and experiment in synaptic learning, "Aybee".

Dr. Krenstein has been travelling with Dur Telemon and Akidda Laagiir since their chance meeting five years ago.

Roleplaying Notes: Dr. Krenstein, the "Mr. Fix-it" of the group, contributes valuable analytical skills. Together with Aybee, the doctor may contribute unusual insights Dur or even Akidda might otherwise overlook.

The doctor is slightly mischievous in the manner in which he conceals Aybee's true robotic nature — a source of much fun if roleplayed completely. The doctor seeks new experiences and knowledge for both his robot and himself, so he will pursue adventure suggestions readily.

Keep the doctor's age in mind — he is the least able of the group physically, although Aybee helps to make up for this.

AYBEE WAN OWEN

APPARENT STATS:
8D9C7B age 19 0 terms Cr 0
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 049-1081
Actual Pseudobiological RobotProfile:
Constructed in 1091 by Dr. Theodor Krenstein
561x2-A2-PM327-FDC7(J) Cr11,970,600 319kg
Fuel=78.1 Duration=21.7 TL=15
7/17 (Jack)
Head (10%), 2 Lt arms
2 Eyes (+1 light intens), 2 ears, voder, touch sensors
Pwr int, brain int, TL 15 holo recorder, Lt laser welder
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Valet-1, Laser Welder-1, Rescue-1, Emotion Simulation

Position: Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Krenstein.

AB-101, or "Aybee", is a pseudobiological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. Aybee's apparent UPP is what Dr. Krenstein wishes Aybee to project to others based upon his programming (he is actually capable of much greater values); his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class is based upon his position as a knight.

Although Aybee's programming gives him certain basic abilities, he lacks true artificial intelligence and thus can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level. Aybee's "weapon" is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Many Imperial worlds specify standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee so that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are generally not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Roleplaying Notes: Without a doubt, Aybee is the most unusual of the quartet. He is also the most difficult to roleplay effectively.

Aybee is the most valuable piece of equipment the group has. He can record situations in 3-D holograph form (10 minutes' worth, after which it is relegated to 2-D storage), then play them back for future study at the group's leisure. He will quietly observe a situation and report his findings to the doctor, keeping the doctor's safety as his priority.

Aybee is a good source of logical analysis, although his conclusions are devoid of any creativity or revelations beyond the obvious (although sometimes the obvious can seem like a revelation). Play him as a naïve, knowledge-hungry character. He should make errors in judgment when a situation relies heavily on intuition. He is likely to miss subtle innuendos that humans are so prone to use.

Strangers who find out that Aybee is a robot may react negatively (increase the difficulty of any interpersonal task one level). Most will never suspect from casual observation that Aybee is nothing but a machine.

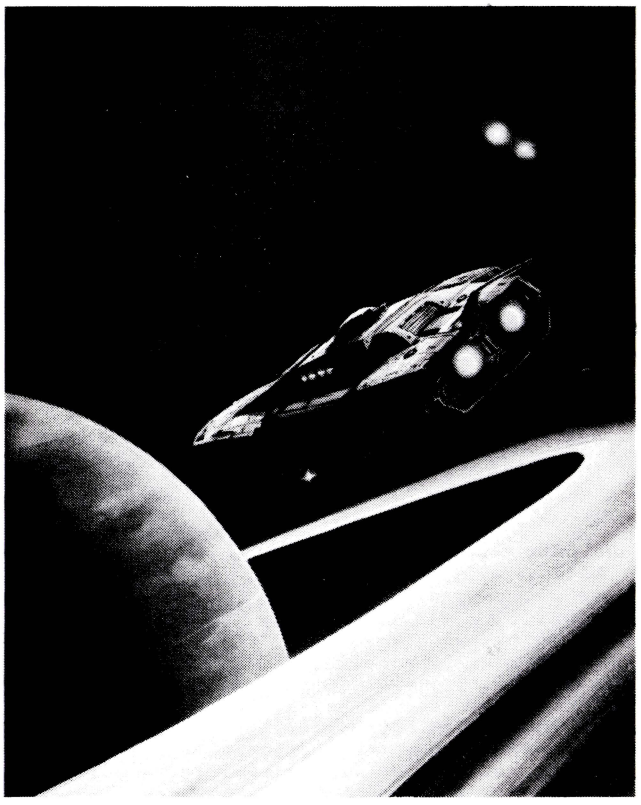
To determine Aybee is a robot at close (1.5m) range:
Difficult, Robotics, Interview, 2 min
Referee: Roll once during the first encounter. Thereafter roll daily if the character constantly spends extended periods of time near Aybee. Otherwise, ignore this task — there is no chance for detection.

Aybee's power plant is a closed hydrogen/open oxygen fuel cell. Aybee carries his own hydrogen supply, but the hydrogen is oxidized by oxygen from the air. Aybee is thus much like a true human in this respect — if he loses his oxygen supply, his power plant will not function. After an accident at the Shudusham Robotics Conference, Krenstein installed a half-hour supply of oxygen for emergencies. Aybee's fuel cell produces a harmless waste by-product which must be eliminated from time to time: pure water.

Twice Confounded

ADVENTURE NUMBER 16

—by William Connors (special thanks to Lawrence C. Smith)



INTRODUCTION

This adventure deals with the experiences of Akidda Laagiir, a reporter for the *Travellers' Digest*, and his three companions as they continue their ongoing tour of the Third Imperium. They have entered Reaver's Deep, a sector in Ilelish Domain on the rimward frontier of the the Imperium Recently, the group has run low on cash and they now find themselves "stranded" on the main world of the Irlaggur system. (Although far from broke, the characters are watching their credits.)

This adventure is written in the visual nugget format introduced in our *Referee's Gaming Kit.*

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS (Referee's Background)

The important non-player characters in this adventure are members of the crew of the *Stephen W. Hawking*, a type L laboratory ship owned by New Horizons.

The Flight Crew

Veronika Champaign, ex-navy lt. commander (pilot / captain)

649CDA Age 35 4 terms

Pilot-3, Navigation-2, Sensor Ops-2, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Forward Observer-1, Handgun-1, Liaison-1, Medic-1, Ship Tactics-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Vacc Suit-0

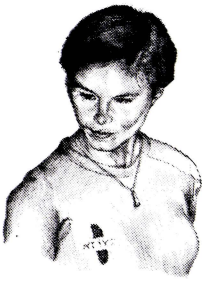
Starport A, Medium, Std Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, High Stellar

Veronika Champaign remains smiling and optimistic in all but the most difficult of situations.

Veronika joined New Horizons shortly after her retirement from the navy. *Stephen W. Hawking* represents her first command for New Horizons. She runs her ship in a professional manner.

When aboard the *Hawking*, Captain Champaign is always in uniform and wearing a sidearm (a snub pistol). Unless she has reason to do otherwise, she keeps it loaded with tranq rounds.

Peka Harran-Faye, ex-pirate



37B9B6 Age 35 3 terms

Engineer-2, Mechanical-2, Brawling-1, Demolition-1, Electronics-1, Gravitics-1, Computer-0, Gun Combat-0, Wheeled Vehicle-0

Starport A, Large, Thin Atm, Water World, Mod Pop, Ext Law, Early Stellar

Peka Harran-Faye spent twelve years with a band of pirates operating on the Solomani/Aslan border. Her association with the pirates ended suddenly — while on shore leave, she learned the band had been hunted down and destroyed by the Solomani Navy. Taking care to cover up her unsavory past, Peka managed to find a position aboard a New Horizons ship and has since grown fond of her new work. Peka, however, has a violent temper, tends to hold a grudge, and is at times a heavy drinker.

Ahkugi Gerrandur, ex-scout (senior engineer)

86A7A5 Age 39 4 terms

Engineer-4, Jack-of-all-trades-3, Laser Weapons-2, Electronics-1, Instruction-1, Pilot-1, Computer-0, Wheeled Vehicle-0

Starport A, Medium, Thin Atm, Dry , Mod Pop, High Law, Early Stellar

Brian VanKonynenburg, ex-flyer (navigator)

896882 Age 27 2 terms

Navigation-2, Aircraft-1, Artisan-1, Computer-1, Vacc Suit-1, Gun Combat-0, Wheeled Vehicle-0

Starport A, Medium, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, Industrial

Kim Wasuki, ex-belter (medic)

9B5796 Age 33 3 terms

Medical-3, Computer-1, Sensor Ops-1, Ship's Boat-1, Vacc Suit-1, Zero-G Environ-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Gun Combat-0

Starport A, Asteroid, Vacuum, Desert, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

The Science Team

Dr. Diann Corrigun, scientist (research director)

874BB6 Age 38 5 terms

History-3, Robotics-3, Electronics-1, Engineering-1, Gravitics-1, Interrogation-1, Mechanical-1, Ship's Boat-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle- 0, Gun Combat-0

Starport B, Small, Std Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Average Stellar

Diann Corrigun, a somewhat stocky woman, can be both dangerous and deceitful. She wants to "make her mark in history" by uncovering some great revelation about the Ancients, but to date has not done so. She has heard of Krenstein, and knows of his stature in the scientific community. Corrigun looks upon the upcoming trip as a chance

to "pick his brains" and then thrust herself into the forefront using his ideas rather than her own. Corrigun has assigned Tahnlee, her Vegan assistant, to work with Akidda, believing that this will prevent both Akidda and Tahnlee from noticing her attempts to claim credit for Krenstein's ideas until it is too late.

Dame Xandra Mourless, Student (lab assistant)

7A898B Age 20 0.5 terms

Computer-1, Robotics-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Gun Combat-0

Starport C, Medium, Exotic Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Dame Xandra Mourless, a very attractive young woman, is one of five students currently working aboard the Hawking as a part of their college curriculum. Dame Xandra is somewhat naive, having been raised in a sheltered environment. Her time aboard the *Hawking* has been quite enlightening for her, however.

Dr. Tahnlee, Scientist (assistant research director)
767AB3 Age 34 4 terms

Robotics-3, Chemistry-2, Computer-2, Electronics-2, History-2, Mechanical-2, Physics-1, Sensor Ops-1, Ship's Boat-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Gun Combat-0

Starport A, Medium, Std Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, High Stellar

Tahnlee, a Vegan, was born on Muan Gwi in the Solomani Rim. An open and honest individual, she does not fully understand the true nature of her superior. Like Dr. Corrigun, she has heard of Dr. Krenstein, but unlike Diann Corrigun, Tahnlee has the utmost respect for the doctor.

Grehgar Wuchaka
B7C789 Age 22 1 term

Brawling-1, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Robot Ops-1, Grav Vehicle-0 , Gun Combat-0

Starport C, Medium, Exotic Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar

Bryan Nevre, Student
776BA7 Age 22 1 term Major Skills: History-3, Electronics-2

Tana Raukel,Student
6768A6 Age 20 0.5 term Major Skills: Computer-3, Gravitics-1, Artisan-1

Baukka Vaughann, Student
865685 Age 22 1 term Major Skills: Biology-4

Dr. Gomm Daezinni, Scientist
557998 Age 30 3 terms Major Skills: Computer-5, Sensor Ops-3

Barnet Waite, Scientist
447A96 Age 60 10.5 terms Major Skills: Electronics-6, JOT-3

Janice Jones, Scientist
46988A Age 42 6 terms Major Skills: Chemistry-4, Computer-4

Dyleema Vonn Merlun, Scientist
548CA6 Age 28 3.5 terms Major Skills: Genetics-5

These NPCs can be used by the referee as a way to supply information to the players, make suggestions to keep things moving, and so forth. Near the end of the adventure, when events really start to go wild aboard *Hawking*, using these lesser NPCs as "cannon fodder" will tell the players in no uncertain terms that the situation is dangerous and even lethal.

In addition to *Hawking*'s crew, there is one other NPC which plays an important part in this adventure:

Ancients' Sabotage Robot (constructed circa -300,000)
33A5F-04-NN527-3FEN 111kg
Fuel = 21.3 Tech = 17+
Duration = 7 days with external air+5 hours on internal air
4 / 9 (Combat Armor
4 Very Light Arms
Visual Sensor (telescopic, light intensifier, passive infrared), Audio Sensor (extra sensitive), basic sensor array, magnetic sensor, radiation sensor, neutrino sensor
Power interface, brain interface, light laser welder, electronic tools
Electronic-3, Demolition-2, Laser Welder-2, Security-2, Close Combat-1, Engineer-1, Mechanical-1

All intact Ancients' robots found to date (and there have been only a few) did not function. To get one of these robots to work again would be a major breakthrough, and make archeological history. Such will be the result with this robot (apparently). Its purpose is not easy to determine by looking at it.

This robot was designed to look like a normal technician robot and was quite capable of working like one when under observation. But under certain circumstances, the timid little repair robot transformed into a deadly and cunning sabotage weapon from the Ancients' Final War. Once in sabotage mode, the robot would begin to wreak havoc with the systems of any starship it found itself aboard.

Human technology is unfamiliar to the robot, and it will take it some time to "get its bearings". It will make random "changes" to see what effect they have, trying to learn the systems. It will then select the best systems to sabatoge. This entire process will take the robot only a few hours.

The unit has been inactive for something like 300,000 years, but since it operates on antimatter batteries, it has sufficient power to do its dirty work. Once it cuts its way through the floor of its box and the deck below it, the robot will be in the ship's crawlways where the ship's fuel and data control lines run.

REFEREE'S PLOT SUMMARY

The characters are summoned to the magistrate's office on Irlaggur, and the magistrate finds them a working passage on a lab ship. This ship is to pick up some newly discovered Ancient artifacts and study them en route to the world where they will be delivered. Several subplots based on the motivations of the NPCs are begun in the early part of the adventure.

When the Ancient artifacts (three of which are robots) are brought on board, one of them takes advantage of a moment of solitude and escapes its case. It is a sabotage robot. From this point on, things go wrong on the lab ship in a steadily worsening progression, starting with an accident that puts Dur in jeopardy and ending with most systems malfunctioning dangerously. The characters must determine that the missing robot is probably responsible and track it down. Even after the robot is destroyed, the damage it has done to the jump drive endangers the crew and throws the characters into a totally unexpected part of space. An Aslan ship rescues them and gives them the chance to go to Kusyu.

DRAGNET (Opening Dialog)

Dur tossed back his fifth drink of the morning and looked around the spartan hotel room which had been home for the past two weeks. He grimaced at the drink's taste and crushed

the disposable plastic can without thinking. Dur tossed the can in a long arch that should have ended in the trash box next to the room's simulated wood door. Instead, the door opened, deflecting the can at the last instant.

"Aybee, you blew my perfect shot."

"I'm sorry, Dur," said the robot as he stepped into the room, leaving the door half open behind him. "I wasn't aware that you were engaged in sporting activities."

"Sporting activities?" laughed Dur as he rolled out of the gravitic sleep field. "Not me and not on this planet. It's probably illegal to work up a sweat."

"Come now, Dur. We've been on a number of worlds with law levels higher than this one."

"Aybee, I got stopped by the enforcers four times yesterday and asked for my identicard. Do I look like a crook?"

"Do you want an honest answer to that?" asked Akidda Laagiir as he stepped in through the open door.

"Come on, Kidd, have a heart. You can't even get a decent drink around here. Look at the ingredients on this swill." Dur snatched another of the plastic cans from its place beside his sleep field and tossed it to his uncle.

"Fizzle-Pop," Akidda read aloud, "Guaranteed non-alcoholic, non-addictive, non-bitter, and —"

"Non-good," interrupted Dur with a sour look. "Of all the places for our money to run out."

Suddenly, the trio was aware of heavy footfalls in the hall. A team of four uniformed men marched past the open door and on down the hall.

"Enforcers," Dur whispered.

When the enforcers pounded on the door two places from Dur's room, the trio scrambled into the hall. They had almost reached the enforcers when the door opened and a scholarly looking gentleman appeared.

"Dr. Theodor Krenstein?" one of the enforcers asked.

"Yes."

"Dr. Krenstein, you are wanted in the office of the Central Magistrate. Come peacefully and you will not be harmed."

Irlaggur (Players' Background, Library Data)

The Irlaggur system (Reaver's Deep 2624 B6918CE-A) is a binary star system whose primary is a red supergiant (M0 III). The companion star, a white dwarf, orbits at a distance of 3,900 astronomical units. The companion's highly eccentric orbit leads many astronomers to suggest it may have been captured by the primary eons ago.

The world of Irlaggur is roughly 9,000 kilometers in diameter and occupies the eighth orbital position. Irlaggur has only a few small bodies of water scattered about its surface, most of which are located near the poles. Irlaggur's atmosphere consists of a tainted oxygen-nitrogen mix at just under two standard atmospheres of pressure. The taint is an unusual life form known as "plankton".

Irlaggurian plankton is similar to plankton often found in the seas of other worlds, but Irlaggur's higher atmospheric pressure and lighter surface gravity make the atmosphere a viable environment for this kind of microscopic life. A human can breath the plankton-laced air briefly without protection, since the plants are not toxic. Over time, though, some plankton will become lodged in the warm, moist recesses of the lungs, and grow into a colony "infection." If not treated, the lungs will fill with the rapidly reproducing colonies within a week, causing death by suffocation.

Local animal lifeforms have adapted to the plankton-filled air in various ways. Some animals who feed on the plankton have unique filters in their respiratory systems that clean out the plankton, and flush the filtered plankton into their digestive tracts. Most animals on Irlaggur breathe in a distinctive "snorting" fashion, clearing their lungs of the plankton with each breath. In addition, nearly all Irlaggurian animals have strong alkali linings in their lungs that instantly kill any plankton that lodge there.

Irlaggur has a population of 300 million, mostly humans of Imperial or Solomani descent. The Second Survey of 1065 described the government as a Charismatic Oligarchy. Within 3 years of this survey, a local Councilor named Rendi Garru seized total executive power with the support of the population, and declared himself "First Councilor." Acting as an omnipotent dictator, he quickly forgot his promises of governmental reform and oppressed the populace even more, operating his government as a police state. With a law level of "E", Irlaggur is one of the more rigidly controlled societies in Imperial space.

When the Second Survey was released, it listed Irlaggur as a Red Travel Zone due to the rapidly escalating unrest. Following Garru's grab for power and his subsequent destruction of rival revolutionary groups, the situation has become less volatile. In 1100, the Travellers' Aid Society changed the travel zone to its current "Amber" status. Travellers to Irlaggur are still advised to be cautious, as the local enforcers may use any level of force they deem necessary. Only the highest ranking official visitors seem to have any protection from the local enforcers.

The rest of the planets in the system are largely unspectacular. Recently, however, the outermost planet—Danforth's World—has been thrust into the limelight because of a newly discovered Ancient site. New Horizons, the discoverer of the site, has been granted permission by local officials to excavate and study it.

Irlaggur (Referee's Notes): A person breathing the Irlaggurian atmosphere without a filter must roll 2D each hour. If he rolls equal to or higher than the number of hours spent outdoors, he is safe. If he rolls less than the required number, his lungs have become infected. Once infected, roll 1D for the number of days he has before he can no longer breathe. If medical attention is received during that time, the infection can be cleared out.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW (Opening Event)

Players' Impressions: The enforcers are armed and wear charcoal gray cloth armor and headgear, including dark visors over their eyes. All four of them are large, muscular men. They give no indication as to why Krenstein is wanted.

Referee's Summary: The enforcers insist that Krenstein come with them and brook no interference. They do not know why Krenstein is wanted, and were simply told "Bring Dr. Krenstein to me, I want to see him."

Enforcers are hired more for brawn than brains. If it becomes clear that the other characters are part of the same group, they will be hauled in too. Otherwise, the other three characters will have to try to follow Krenstein.

Tasks:

To follow the enforcers and Krenstein without losing them:

Routine, Streetwise, Int, 2 minutes (fateful)

Referee: Use this task only if the characters are not hauled in along with Krenstein. If this task fails, the characters have been spotted trying to follow, and are arrested.

Referee's Details: The typical enforcer UPP is: C8C557, with an average skill level of 2-4 in gun combat.

Enforcers are often quick to anger (since all good citizens are expected to obey the government without question) and equally quick to break a few heads. If the characters insist on being difficult, the enforcers will be more than happy to slam them into the wall or bludgeon them with their pistols.

Dr. Krenstein is not, in fact, in any trouble with the law. The Central Magistrate has heard of Krenstein, and has a serious interest in robotics. The Magistrate's routine check of offworld visitors brought Krenstein to his attention.

WAITING FOR THE MAGISTRATE
(Event 2, Arriving at the Magistrate's Office)

Players' Impressions: The Magistrate's office is richly and tastefully decorated. The characters are led inside and instructed to await the Magistrate. There are no chairs in the room. The desk is only about half a meter high. The floor is covered with a soft, thickly cushioned carpet. The character's feet sink several centimeters into the soft floor.

The guards stand at ease inside the door.

Referee's Summary: The characters are free to converse among themselves as long as they do not whisper or act suspicious. The Central Magistrate will not be able to get away from his other duties for another hour. Meanwhile, the characters will have to wait, standing the whole time.

Tasks:

To stand without excessive discomfort while waiting:

Routine, End (fateful)

Referee: For Dur, this task is Difficult and for Aybee it is Simple. Give the players the impression they will have to make several rolls, but do not tell them how many. Make the players roll this task three times. On failure, give the player the choice: subtract 2 from his endurance, or sit down. Sitting on the floor (or worse, on the Magistrate's desk) will result in that character getting slapped around by the enforcers. Also, upon failure, remember to roll for determination to avoid the task becoming more difficult. If endurance drops to zero, the character collapses.

Referee's Details: You can play this situation in one of two ways: a tense period of anticipation and dread, or a light-hearted attempt to avoid the discomfort of standing for a long time. If the referee opts for the latter approach, there is one other thing to keep in mind: the enforcers will not permit the characters to leave the room for any reason and Dur has just consumed five cans of Fizzle-Pop.

JOB OFFER
(Event 3, Once the Magistrate arrives)

Players' Impressions: An exotically dressed woman enters the room, places the palms of her hands together at the base so they form a "V", and announces in flawless Galanglic "His greatness, the wise Karellna, Magistrate of all Irlaggur, enters...". With that, she waves her arms gracefully and bows toward the door with her hands touching the floor. The enforcers also bow and touch the floor.

Referee's Summary: The characters should at least attempt to bow and touch the floor, as all the NPCs in the room are doing (see the tasks). Karellna will not enter until all have their hands touching the floor. Once Karellna enters, he will be seated first (sitting on the plush floor behind his desk), and will then bid the characters to sit down (on the floor).

Karellna will explain how he found out about Krenstein from the offworld roster on his computer, and how he shares Krenstein's interest in robotics. He would like to hear more about Krenstein's exploits, and how he got so far from the Spinward Marches.

When Karellna is told about the characters' current situation (needing work so that they can continue their travels), he will get the group hired as temporaries working for New Horizons .

Tasks:

To bow and touch the floor with your hands:

Difficult, Dex, End

Referee: Even for Aybee, this task is Difficult. "Doubling over" is the one motion Aybee has trouble doing.

Referee's Details: Karellna will insist on hearing about the characters' many adventures during the past few years. When they finish, he says that he thinks he can help them out and reaches for his netlink communicator. One by one, he calls local firms and, after about an hour, finds them a position with New Horizons aboard one of their research vessels which is going to be making a jump in the direction they are travelling. In addition, he notes that their research involves Ancient artifacts, a subject which will certainly interest Krenstein. He hands them a small plastisheet that instructs them to meet with a Captain Champaign at the popular "Kicsplerugele" lounge near the starport the next morning. At that, he takes them out on the town and, because of his privileged status here, shows them the best time they have had since they landed.

THE KICSPLERUGELE
(Event 4, Meeting with Captain Champaign)

Players' Impressions: The characters arrive at the Kicsplerugele before the captain, and are ushered to a low table surrounded by thick, soft carpet for sitting. While they are waiting, soft, tinkling music can be heard. The gentle, pungent smell of Irlaggurian food filters through the air. The ceiling provides the only light in the room — a soothing pink-orange light, reminiscent of a sunset on clouds.

Referee's Summary: The characters wait for the arrival of their contact in comfort. When Captain Champaign arrives, they find her to be a charismatic woman who greets them warmly.

Champaign first asks the group questions about their skills, abilities, and interests. She reciprocates by telling the group about her vessel, the *Hawking* and about her employer, New Horizons (or NH). Champaign says that on the Magistrate's endorsement, she is willing to offer the group a working passage aboard the *Hawking*. (The rest of this adventure assumes the group accepts the offer.)

After breakfast, the four characters follow Champaign to a landing pad at the starport where they all board the ship's pinnace for the flight up to the *Hawking*, orbiting overhead.

Tasks:

To clear customs at the starport without incident:

Routine, Admin, Edu, 5 min (fateful)

Referee: Have each of the characters (including Champaign) roll for this task. Use the longest duration rolled by any of the characters as the time it takes for all the characters to clear customs. In effect, all the others must wait for the slowest character. If a mishap of any level occurs, simply double the time increment on the task for that character, then clear him through customs anyway. You might have some fun and make him sweat a bit, though.

Referee's Details: The *Stephen Hawking* is one of several ships employed by New Horizons to transport important scientific cargos, especially valuable artifacts. *Hawking*'s current mission is to travel to Danforth's World, the outermost planet in the Irlaggur system, and take possession of a number of Ancient artifacts for transport to Lavinia (Reaver's Deep 2621). At Lavinia, the artifacts will be thoroughly studied and analyzed by the NH labs. During the flight to Lavinia, *Hawking*'s science crew is to conduct preliminary examinations of the artifacts.

Once onboard the *Hawking*, Captain Champaign will have the group fill out several forms on the ship's computer. Champaign assures the group these forms are required by those seeking a working passage on an NH vessel.

After brief computer analysis of the group's abilities, Champaign assigns each character to his duties:

Dr. Krenstein will be involved in the study of the artifacts and will work with the ship's research director, Dr. Diann Corrigun. Krenstein's keen understanding of modern robotics systems should be useful in guessing at the purpose of some of the Ancient artifacts.

Aybee, as usual, will act as Krenstein's personal assistant and valet. Although NH would not normally permit a valet to travel in a "working passage" situation, the characters' noble status and Krenstein's reputation have made them more flexible than usual.

Dur's position aboard *Hawking* will be "maintenance technician". For the last few months, the engineering crew has been unable to keep up with their routine maintenance duties: they need a helping hand to get back on schedule. Dur reports to the ship's chief engineer, Ahkugi Gerrandur.

Akidda's journalism skills will help New Horizons write the promotional documentary the company has been wanting to do. During the flight, Akidda is to learn as much as he can about *Hawking*'s work and shape it into a coherent manuscript. Akidda's primary contact for the flight is Dr. Tahnlee.

THE *STEPHEN W. HAWKING*
(Players' Background)

The *Stephen W. Hawking* is a typical Type L Laboratory Ship and is owned and operated by New Horizons . The craft is similar to that described in the **MegaTraveller** *Imperial Encyclopedia* (page 83).

Craft ID:	Laboratory Ship, Type L, TL 15, MCr72.13
Hull:	360/900, Disp=400, Config=1USL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=2010 tons, Loaded=2280 tons
Power:	5/10, Fusion=5382Mw, Duration=30/90
Loco:	7/14, Maneuver=1, 11/22, Jump=2, Cruise=900kph, Top=1200kph, Agility=1
Commo:	Radio=System
Sensors:	Passive EMS=Interstellar, Active EMS=FarOrbit, Densitometer=HighPen/1km, Neutrino=10kw, ActObjScan=Rout, ActObjPin=Rout, PasObjScan=Rout, PasObjPin=Rout, PasEngScan=Simp
Off/Def:	Hardpoints=4, DefDM=+4
Control:	Computer=2x3, Panel=holodynamic linkx420, Special=headsUpx3, Environ=basic env, basic ls, extend ls, grav plates, inertial comp
Accomm:	Crew=6(Bridge=2, Engineer=2, Stewards=1, Medical=1), Staterooms=20, SubCraft=pinnace, air/raftx2
Other:	Cargo=310kliters, Laboratory=1150kliters, Fuel=1342kliters, Purification Plant ObjSize=Average, EMLevel=Moderate

Hawking carries a 40 ton pinnace, the *Murray Gell-Mann*. The pinnace is configured more like a modular cutter, with replaceable modules. Other than this, it conforms to the standards laid down for craft of its type in the **MegaTraveller** *Imperial Encyclopedia* (page 79). *Hawking*'s hull has four hardpoints, but in keeping with the company policy of New Horizons , the craft mounts no weapons. In fact, the space set aside for fire control systems by the designers has been turned into a storage area for supplies and infrequently used lab equipment. A total of 1150 kiloliters of volume has been dedicated as laboratory space. This is broken into three smaller labs, each about 375 kiloliters. Designated Alpha, Beta, and Gamma, these labs can be reconfigured to suit the research being done. Recently, *Hawking* has set up a robotics lab in Alpha, an electronics lab in Beta, and an archeology lab in Gamma to expedite the teams' recent work at the Ancients' site.

JOURNEY TO DANFORTH'S WORLD
(Referee's Information Only)

Once the characters have been assigned to their positions, the *Hawking* breaks orbit and begins the four-day hop to Danforth's World at the edge of the system.

Use this time to set up the subplots upon which the rest of the adventure is built. The four events which follow are each meant for one of the player characters.

Captain Champaign gives individual orders to each character: Dur is to wait in the ship's lounge for Assistant Engineer Ms. Harran-Faye to meet with him and give him his assignments. Like Dur, Ms. Harran-Faye reports to Ahkugi.

SEEDS OF DISCONTENT
(Day 1 event, Dur Telemon, Ship's Lounge)

Players' Impressions: The ship's lounge exhibits a muted blue decor, and is nicely trimmed with a multitude of plants, which give it a mild pine-like smell.

While Dur is relaxing in the lounge, the lounge door slides open with a whisper, and a woman in a tan work jumper enters the room. She looks around the room, then walks up to Dur, and glares at him.

Referee's Summary: The ship's Assistant Engineer (Peka Harran-Faye) is not happy to see Dur. Despite any statement to the contrary, she thinks Dur is after her job. Dur being a noble makes her all the more suspicious.

Tasks:

Various maintenance tasks, as appropriate.

Referee's Details: Harran-Faye immediately gives Dur a hard time. Statements like "boy, you new engineering hands get worse all the time...", or "even a retarded chirper knows how to unfasten a Forbee Maintenance panel..." will be frequent. She will seek any opportunity to insult Dur.

Have Dur roll frequently for various maintenance tasks around the ship. If he gets anything less than exceptional success, Harran-Faye will have some criticism of his work or methods. Even exceptional success will get little approval beyond comments like "humph — took you long enough" or "it's about time".

If the Dur player continues to take the verbal abuse without putting up much of a fuss, have the player start rolling determination tasks to "keep his cool". If Dur says anything or does anything to provoke her, Harran-Faye will respond by saying "why you little — —", and take a swing at Dur. Further, she will threaten Dur with a remark (as she storms off) like: "Watch your step, mister, or you just might not make it to Danforth's World."

CRUSH
(Day 2, Krenstein and Aybee, At breakfast)

Players' Impressions: Aybee and Dr. Krenstein are eating a tasty breakfast, and enjoying the view of the stars and the distant reddish gas giant. A lovely young woman walks by and quotes "hidden in the worst 'disarray' are the patterns of greatest beauty", which Krenstein recognizes as a quote from a famous holobook on subatomic physics.

"I never cease being impressed by the simple, intricate beauty of the heavens", she adds. With that she extends her hand, palm out, to Krenstein. "Dame Xandra Mourless — you must be Sir Theodor Krenstein."

Referee's Summary: Dame Xandra's real interest is Krenstein's young and handsome assistant, Aybee. She wants very much to get to know Aybee, and is using Krenstein as a way to be introduced. After this conversation, she asks if she can join Krenstein and Aybee in the day's activities.

Dame Xandra reminds Krenstein of his dear, departed wife — his player should be encouraged to agree to Xandra joining them for the day. By the end of the day, it will be apparent Dame Xandra has a crush on Aybee.

Tasks:

No special tasks needed for this nugget.

Referee's Details: Dame Xandra (she insists that others always include the title "Dame" when calling her by name), is young woman of stunning beauty, possessed with all the grace and charm of a well-bred Imperial noble.

Send Krenstein's player a note stating "Dame Xandra reminds you of your dear wife, who died about 15 years ago. Although you had three children, the two of you often referred to Aybee as the 'son we built'." Use Krenstein's sentimental attitude about the Dame to encourage his player to allow the romance between Aybee and Dame Xandra to develop.

You can have fun making the young lady's crush on Aybee fairly obvious. For example, at some point when Xandra and Aybee are beyond the earshot of Krenstein, the Dame can pick up Aybee's hand, stroke it softly, and say "My, you have such strong hands, Aybee..." In all cases, Xandra's actions should be innocent and sweet rather than seductive or suggestive.

As the events in this nugget unfold, the rumors of Dame Xandra's actions circulate around the ship's grapevine. In fact, some of the ship's crew will begin to foster the relationship by arranging things so that, for example, the only open seat in the lounge is next to Xandra when Aybee walks in. You should continue to make use of this developing romance to complicate Aybee's life and add humor throughout the adventure.

NEW KIDD ON THE BLOCK
(Day 3, Akidda's Interview with Tahnlee)

Player's Impressions: Dr. Tahnlee's schedule does not permit her to grant Akidda an interview until the third day of the trip. Dr. Tahnlee is a tall, bizzare-looking alien known as a Vegan. Dr. Tahnlee is quite pleasant to speak to, and her galanglic has only a hint of an accent.

Referee's Summary: Tahnlee talks about her position on the *Hawking* and her feelings about her career with New Horizons. During this conversation, Akidda also learns that Dr. Corrigun, the research director and Tahnlee's boss, has a bad memory. If Akidda's player asks shrewd questions (or he makes a good task roll — see tasks), he will learn that Corrigun rarely remembers who on her research team actually made a discovery. Some discoveries of the team she even refers to in later conversation as "my discoveries".

With a little deduction, Akidda's player may decide Corrigun is actually trying to take credit for the discoveries of others. Potentially, Corrigun could try to steal credit for some of Krenstein's work while he is on the *Hawking.*

Tasks:

To complete the interview with Tahnlee:

Routine, Interview, Edu, 15 minutes

Referee: On exceptional success, Tahnlee will reveal clues about of Corrigun's poor handling of the research team discoveries. If this task fails, Tahnlee was interrupted, and will have to finish the interview another time.

Referee's Details: Corrigun is in fact stealing the work of others, and trying to take credit for their work. Any research worker who protests to Corrigun that she is trying to take undue credit, she reports as a troublemaker. If that worker brings the topic up with Captain Champaign or the New Horizon officials, the complaint is taken largely as further proof of Corrigun's contention that the worker is "a known troublemaker". Later, still more protesting by the worker ("wait a minute — I did this, NOT you!) makes him look all the more like the one trying to steal the credit, and only makes matters worse. Meanwhile, Corrigun's reputation remains clean and she gets the credit. Clues about Corrigun's deceitful nature should be handed out slowly to Akidda's player as he conducts the interview with Tahnlee.

Tahnlee, being an alien, does not fully understand human behavior. Tahnlee's theory is that Corrigun has a bad memory. Tahnlee mentions that Corrigun sometimes "sits" on discoveries for no reason. Other times, Corrigun has made a big deal about certain discoveries before the rest of the crew. In such announcement meetings, Corrigun rarely singles out one of her research team and recognizes them. Tahnlee has even seen Corrigun in later conversation refer to the findings of her research team as "my discoveries", as if she's totally forgotten who really made them.

LOVE'S FIRST KISS
(Day 5, Nearing Danforth's World)

Players' Impressions: A few hours before *Hawking* arrives in orbit above Danforth's World, Aybee and Krenstein are working in the lab to make sure that they are ready when the artifacts are brought aboard. Dame Xandra comes in, dressed in an attractive tailored work robe. She offers to help Krenstein and Aybee, and won't take no as an answer. A few minutes later, Corrigun pages Dame Xandra, asking her to come to Corrigun's cabin. Looking frustrated , Dame Xandra turns to go. On her way out, she pauses and kisses Aybee lightly on the cheek.

"I'll be back as soon as I can." she remarks as she exits.

Referee's Summary: At this point, Krenstein's player may start worrying about the potential risks of Aybee's growing love relationship with Dame Xandra. She obviously doesn't realize Aybee is a robot, and to find out he's only a machine could hurt her. The hurt will only get worse if Krenstein allows this relationship to grow. However, Krenstein's feelings in this matter are not as clear as they should be. Encourage Krenstein's player to let the romance continue.

Tasks:

To get the determination to tell Xandra the truth about Aybee:

Formidable, End, Int, absolute: 1 day

Referee: As long as this task fails, Krenstein will remain indecisive about what to tell Dame Xandra about Aybee.

Referee's Details: You should point out to Krenstein's player that this chance to study Aybee's reactions to a potential romance situation is unprecedented. Remember, telling such a sweet young woman that she has a crush on a robot is not easy to do with tact. One viable option — try to keep the pair separated for the rest of the voyage. Then there's always "I'm going back to Rhylanor, and your family is here..." As an interesting twist, you may encourage the robot's player to consider that he is an experimental robot with a very complicated emotion simulation program. The logical connections of this program may not always be predictable. Thus, it is possible for Aybee to develop behavior which resembles a crush on Dame Xandra. His train of thought is simple enough: Dame Xandra has expressed affection for him, she would be hurt unless he returned her feelings, thus he must appear to feel affection for her. (His robot brain would only see this as interesting, since emotion simulation programming governs only external actions.)

Encourage Krenstein's player to be torn between permiting this ultimate experiment in imitative behavior, and letting the girl down easy somehow. Encourage the player running Aybee to make attempts to return Xandra's affectionate words and meaningful glances.

Remind Aybee's player that he has no real experience in this area, so his only source of information will be past media descriptions of romance. Aybee's player should tend toward the melodramatic with his "love" life.

If any of the adventure events reveal Aybee as a robot to Xandra, she will be so embarrassed that she will not come out of her quarters for three days and will barely speak to Aybee or Krenstein thereafter.

STOP OVER AT DANFORTH'S WORLD
(Day 5, Orbiting Danforth's World)

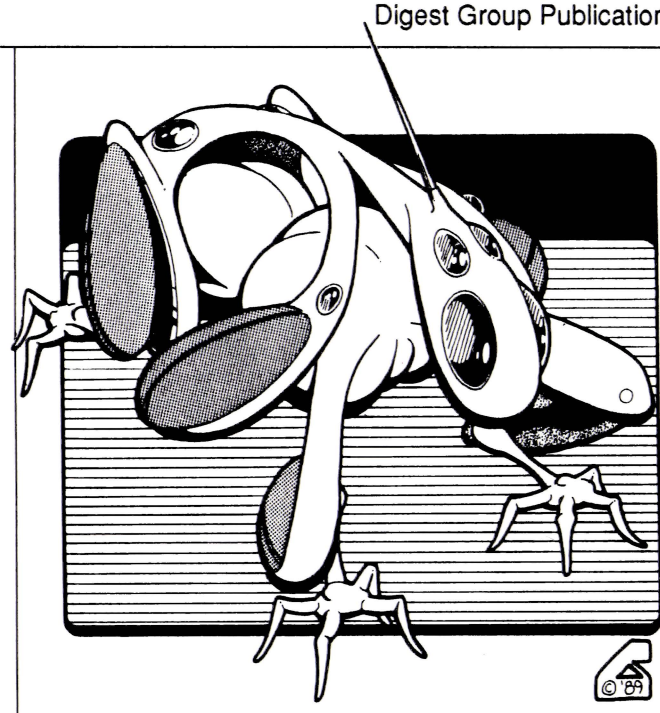
Players' Impressions: The characters watch as the *Gell-Mann* drops away from the *Hawking*, and disappears from sight in less than a minute. The barren curve of Danforth's World looms below.

Referee's Summary: Captain Champaign and Dr. Corrigun have taken the pinnace down to surface of Danforth's World to pick up the artifacts. While they do so, the players are exposed to background information about the site.

The player characters, not being regular employees of New Horizons, are restricted from visiting the Ancient site. Although they can watch the progress of the recovery mission on the ship's monitors, they are unable to obtain permission to visit the surface.

Referee's Details: The Ancient site on Danforth's World is small. All of the evidence acquired by New Horizons suggests that relics being unearthed there are debris from a massive space vessel which crashed during the Final War. The vessel apparently impacted Danforth's World with such force that it buried itself nearly a kilometer underground. The vessel was recently discovered by an extensive densitometer scan, using the latest equipment. Little of the ship survived the crash — the artifacts were found in the only portion of the ship that was at all intact. A human ship making such a landing would have been atomized. If Krenstein wishes to study the matter, he will learn nothing not already known. The incredible tensile strength of Ancient metals is familiar to him from his time on Antiquity.

Stephen Hawking has been assigned to pick up the remains of eleven artifacts which were found in the wreck. The artifacts include three robot-like devices of unknown purpose. Once



the robots have been mentioned, it is entirely within character for Krenstein to be waiting with an unlocking wrench in hand, eager to open the cargo modules as soon as they come off of the pinnace.

UNPACKING
(Day 5, Once the Pinnace Arrives)

Players' Impressions: Excitement is in the air as the pinnace eases into the lab ship's central hub. Captain Champaign and Dr. Corrigun each exit the pinnace pushing a floater stacked with sealed cargo modules of various sizes. *Referee's Summary:* Corrigun asks Krenstein, Aybee, and Dame Xandra to take the three robots to the robotics lab, but gives them no time to open them. She assigns others to transport the remaining artifacts. The three cargo bins are labeled "robot 1", "robot 2", and "robot 3".

The *Hawking* leaves its orbit and begins high acceleration to the 100-diameter jump point. Dr. Corrigun calls a meeting of all the researchers in the lounge to discuss their next step with the artifacts.

Tasks:
To transport the robots safely:
Routine, Grav Veh, Dex, 1 min

Referee's Details: The robot labeled "robot 2" is the Ancients' sabotage robot. The wreck on Danforth's World occurred when this robot caused the ship's maneuver drive to activate at full thrust. The crew of the doomed vessel were unable to change its vector soon enough to keep it from crashing.

INTERLUDE
(Referee's info, from orbit to jump point)

Meanwhile, while no one is in the lab — they are all at Dr. Corrigun's meeting — a long-passive system in the dormant sabotage robot detects the new acceleration. Power stored millenia ago in superconducting batteries is tapped and activates the sabotage robot's brain. It reaches out with its sensors and examines its surroundings. "The design and technology employed is alien, but no matter. Must carry out my purpose..."

Making use of its laser cutting torch, the robot cuts through the cargo module in which it rests, to the floor beneath. Cutting through the floor, it drops down into a air duct. "Now to find other intraship connections," the robot reasons. Within a few minutes of its awakening, the robot has already tapped into one of the fuel lines that runs to *Stephen Hawking*'s main power plant.

ROBOT 1
(Use when Krenstein studies robot 1)

Players' Impressions: Robot 1 is a brown, conical device about 1.8 meters in length. Attached to the "body" are four tentacles. The device seems to be damaged, because when you tip it or lay it over on its side, loose components can be heard rattling and clunking around inside. It has no apparent maintenance panels.

Referee's Summary: This robot is an undamaged repair robot. The loose parts are spare items stowed inside.

Tasks:

To unpack each robot device:

Difficult, Dex, Int, 10 min

Referee: This task must be performed successfully three times — once for each device (see following nuggets). On failure, there has simply been a close call, with no damage done. However, on exceptional failure, the device is somehow damaged. A cautious attempt is a wise precaution.

To get an idea of what the purpose of robot 1 may be:

Formidable, Robotics, Int, 1 hr (uncertain)

Referee: Ask the player to explain (in general terms) what he is doing to examine the robot during this task. If he is physically tampering with the robot (such as using a laser welder on it), make this task fateful. A smart player will use a cautious attempt in this case. Consider exceptional success on the part of the player to upgrade the truth level by one. For example, if the player rolls exceptional success, but your hidden roll failed, ordinarily the result would be some truth. But because the player got exceptional success, upgrade the truth level to total truth. If the player rolls exceptional success, and you secret roll succeeds, treat the result as "exceptional truth", below. Ignore exceptional success or exceptional failure on the referee's secret roll.

No Truth: no idea — totally stumped.

Some Truth: make something up — anything silly will do.

Total Truth: give only the vaguest of clues — the more vague, the better.

Exceptional Truth: give the player a less vague clue.

To open up the chassis of robot 1:

Impossible, Mechanical, Edu, 1 hr (hazardous)

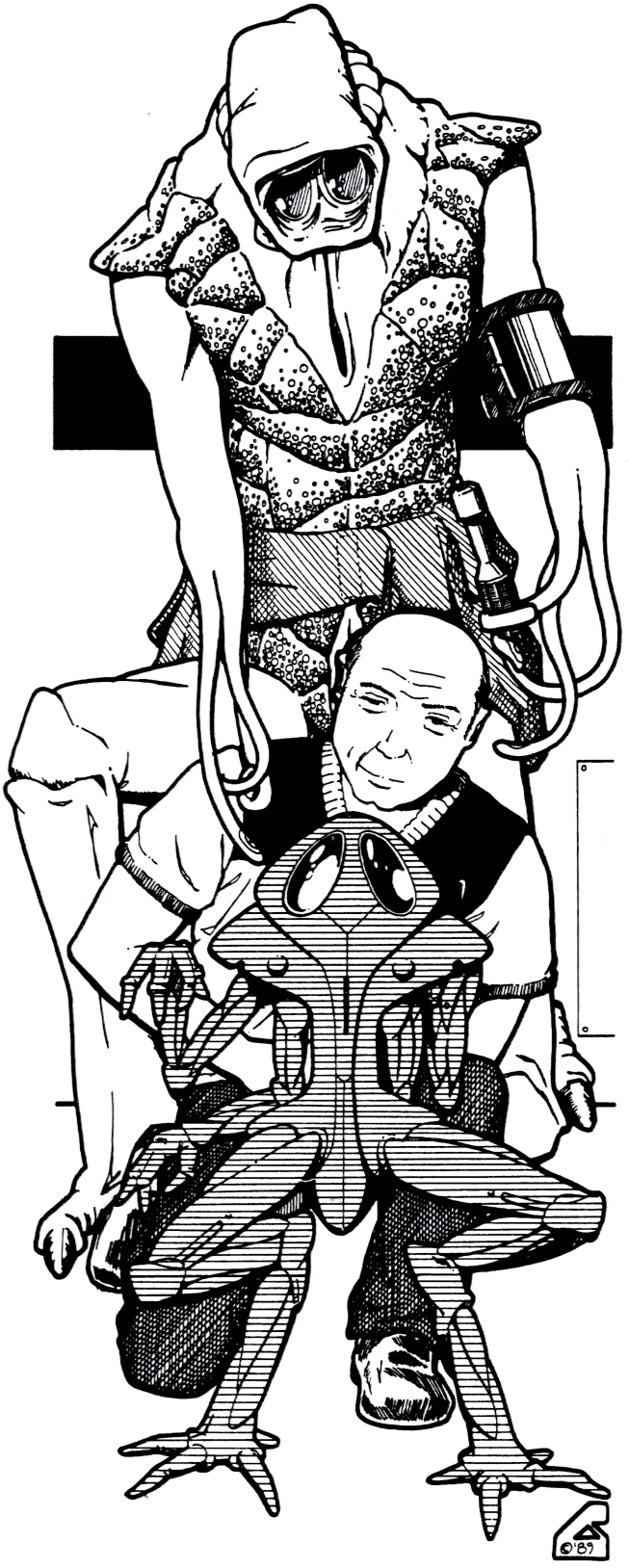
Referee: A mishap results in damage to the tools used, the researcher, or both. The robot will be undamaged. If with caution and luck this task does succeed, roll for a mishap on the robot to see how badly it is damaged.

Referee's Details: Contrary to what things seem, the repair robot is not damaged. The loose parts inside are spare replacement modules in onboard "cargo stowage". The robot's internal antimatter battery has run down.

Without the special access tool used by the ancients, there is only the most remote of chances that the chassis of any of these robots can be opened up.

ROBOT 2
(Use when Krenstein studies robot 2)

Players' Impressions: When Krenstein opens the module containing robot 2, he gets the surprise of his life: it's gone! There is a laser-cut hole in the bottom of the module, and into the floor — the robot is nowhere to be found.



Referee's Summary: By this time the robot is well on its way to wreaking havoc onboard the *Hawking*. The characters may search for the robot, but it is cunning, and quite able to evade most searches.

Tasks:

To get an idea of what the purpose of robot 2 may be:
Formidable, Robotics, Int, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: Given that robot 2 has "run off", the players now have a subtle clue as to the purpose of robot 2. Consider exceptional success on the part of the player to upgrade the truth level by one, as explained in the task for robot 1.

To find the missing robot:
Formidable, Sensor Ops, Engineering, 1 hr

Referee's Details: The sabotage robot is hard at work learning the ship's systems so that it can introduce malfunctions. The robot is also smart enough to suspect that it may be in danger of discovery. If it suspects the crew is getting "wise" to its tampering in a certain location, it will quickly move on to avoid getting caught.

The players should realize they have found the first ever functioning Ancient robot. It will provide Akidda with a great story for his magazine, if he survives to write it. If the players decide to alert Captain Champaign about the robot, she will sound an intruder alert. If Peka has been confined to her stateroom (if this happens after the first accident, below), Champaign will order Peka released from her cabin and all of the ship's personnel will be issued sidearms.

An examination of the ship will reveal that the intruder has cut a series of passages beneath the flooring, giving it access to the entire vessel. Captain Champaign will organize a systematic search of the ship, with the player characters given a specific section to search. As referee, you would do well to organize the search details before the session begins, so as to not hold up the session while you try to figure out who should search where.

ROBOT 3
(Use when Krenstein studies robot 3)

Players' Impressions: Robot 3 is a white cylinder about 1 meter in height. Attached to this robot's glossy white body are eleven strange appendages. None of the appendages have an obvious hand. Two small panels 2cm x 2cm can be opened — and out of each falls a considerable quantity of dust. It has no other apparent openings.

Referee's Summary: Robot 3 is a cooking robot. All the strange appendages are cooking utensils, and the dust is the remains of millenia-old cooking additives.

Tasks: See the tasks on robot 1.

Referee's Details: Robot 3 has a large number of small internal storage chambers which are used to hold various spices and seasonings, all of which are now mere dust. Chemical analysis could reveal that they were once organic matter. A number of cooking utensils are affixed to its cylindrical chassis, many of which are unknown to human culinary experts.

THE FIRST ACCIDENT
(Shortly before reaching the jump point)

Players' Impressions: Dur and Peka have been assigned to pull maintenance on the pinnace power plant. Shortly after they reach the pinnace, the senior engineer comes on the vidlink.

"Telemon, I need Peka back here to assist me for a few minutes. Do you think you can do some power plant checks on your own?"

As Peka leaves, she turns to Dur and points at a panel on the drive housing.

"Dur, why don't you pull the cover off of the main fuel injectors while I'm gone, we can check them out first. Try not to screw it up." Dur should have no trouble opening the unit (see task). The injectors could use some cleaning and realignment. Suddenly, *Gell-Mann*'s airlock slams closed and locks into place and the pinnace computer addresses Dur.

"Attention crewman Telemon, there is a system failure in the laser ignition system of the pinnace power plant."

Referee's Summary: Dur finds some unknown person has ordered the fusion power plant of the pinnace to cold start without an adequate reaction containment bottle in place. In 15 minutes, the pinnace and the *Hawking* will be engulfed in a thermonuclear explosion. Dur will either have to stop the reaction, or get out of the pinnace so it can be separated from the main ship before the explosion.

Tasks:

To remove the injector cover:
Routine, Engineering, Dex, 5 seconds

To "pick" the locking mechanism on the pinnace airlock:
Difficult, Electronics, Dex, 1 minute (fateful)

Referee: Since this task is likely to cause severe damage to the locking mechanism, it can only be attempted once from each side. Failure makes further attempts from the same side of the door useless. A hasty attempt might be a good idea.

To cut through the airlock doors:
Routine, Mechanical, Dex, 2 minutes

Referee: Although this task is easier than picking the lock, it also takes longer. Thus, the choice between the two is very hard to make. Again, a hasty attempt might be a good idea.

To shut down the power plant:
Impossible, Engineering, Edu, 1 minute (fateful,uncertain)

Referee: This is almost impossible because of the robot's expertise. A cautious attempt (if successful) could make this task barely achievable.

To blow an emergency exit through the cockpit:
Routine, Laser Weapon or Demolitions, Dex, 30 seconds

To don a vacc suit and exit through any opening:
Routine, Vacc Suit, Dex, 15 sec

Referee's Details: When Dur asks the computer for additional information, he is told: "The fuel ignition chamber has been cold started. However, there is a defect in the gravimagnetic containment bottle. The containment bottle will not hold the full fusion reaction. The thermonuclear reaction will engulf both the *Gell-Mann* and the *Hawking* in 15 minutes." As for the airlock doors, the computer seems unable to open the locks. Although the hatch is equipped with explosive bolts and can be blown off, this could breach the pylon which connects the craft with *Hawking*. It would be possible for the *Hawking* to cast off the pinnace and then let Dur blow the hatch and exit in a vacc suit, if anyone thinks of it. Captain Champaign will refuse to give up on the rescue attempt until just before the predicted time of the explosion. To her, the craft is expendable, but Dur is not. Only as a last resort will she eject the craft with Dur aboard.

The other members of the crew, including the PCs, will want to focus their attention on rescuing Dur so that the pinnace can be released before it explodes. One way is by cutting through the doors. Bringing a laser cutter to bear on the airlock doors may take some time, but it is sure to get results. The only problem is that there may not be enough time. Dur does not have a cutter in the pinnace powerful enough to cut the bonded superdense alloys of the doors.

An alternate solution is to manually override the locking mechanism. This requires precise manipulation of the delicate microcircuitry in the locking module. Dur can attempt to do this from within the pinnace with the equipment there. Those outside the ship can try this on their end while Dur tries it from within. By the same token, someone could begin cutting through the door while Dur tries to force the lock. Because of space constraints, however, the party outside of *Gell-Mann* can elect only one of the rescue options. Dur is also free to attempt to shut down the power plant prior to the detonation. He will find that the power-up sequence has been altered in the pinnace computer. Unfortunately, the power-down process has also been corrupted. To fix the computer logic damage will be a time-consuming process, and Dur's skill is limited. To just "start pulling wires" or to shut off the computer could actually make the power plant go critical sooner than 15 minutes. Dur would be well-advised to leave bad enough alone.

Dur might find a vacc suit in a locker on the pinnace and attempt to blow an emergency exit through the cockpit windows. He could then move with his suit jets to the airlock at the base of the pylon. He must get inside before the explosion of the jettisoned pinnace or suffer severe radiation exposure (see issue 15 Medical Digest).

As soon as Dur is out of the craft, the crew can retreat up the pylon to *Hawking*, jettison the pinnace, and accelerate away from it. Seconds after it is clear there is a blinding flash and the *Gell-Mann* is destroyed.

Although the referee should make it look like Dur is in great danger, she should not let Dur be killed. Keep building up the tension, but the ship does not explode until it is cast free from *Hawking*. The computer's estimate is just that — an estimate.

THE FINGER OF BLAME
(Use immediately after the pinnace explosion)

Players' Impressions: Shortly after the accident aboard *Gell-Mann*, Captain Champaign orders all aboard to assemble in the lounge for a conference. Captain Champaign has no trace of her famous smile.

"Alright, starting from the top — what happened over there?" the captain demands.

Referee's Summary: Everyone will no doubt turn to Dur for answers. If he hints that the malfunction seemed to be a deliberate "setup", Captain Champaign will be reluctant to believe any deliberate act was involved.

The players may suspect Peka of tampering with the pinnace's power plant. Captain Champaign recognizes that a rivalry (instigated by Peka) exists between Dur and Peka. However, the captain will not be convinced that Peka would do such a thing, especially as it endangered all of them. There is enough evidence available to convince the captain to confine Peka to her quarters — if the player characters are persistent enough.

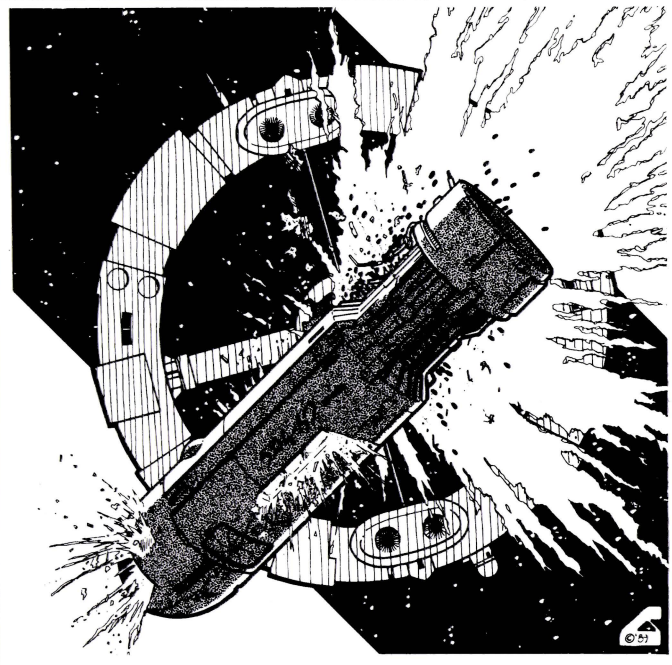
Tasks:

To convince Champaign to arrest Peka:

Difficult, Liaison, Soc, 5 minutes

Referee: Success results in the Captain ordering Ms. Harran-Faye to her cabin and instructing the computer to seal her in for the duration of the flight.

Referee's Details: When the inquiry begins, Captain Champaign will respond with some concern to any accusations made against Peka. An examination of the ship's crew movement recordings reveals that Peka was in the pinnace about a half an hour before the accident. Gerrandur will point out, however, that she was supposed to be there as the two of them were making some routine examinations of the ship after it returned from Danforth's World.



Peka will respond with outrage to the proceedings if they turn against her. She may eventually fly off the handle and begin to verbally abuse Dur. If given a chance, she will charge at him and attempt to strike him. This, of course, does little to convince people that she is innocent.

CUPID'S DARTS
(Use the day after the pinnace accident)

Players' Impressions: After *Hawking* makes jump transition, Krenstein and Aybee will no doubt be studying one of the Ancients' robots in the lab.

The lab door slides open and Dame Xandra enters with a broad smile on her face.

"Hello, Aybee," she says as she leans over and kisses his cheek. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Referee's Summary: This is a chance for Aybee's player to practice his roleplaying skills. The encounter with Dame Xandra can go in many directions and the referee must be ready to deal with anything the player may do. As for Krenstein's player, he should be taking notes on the exchange so that he can understand what is going through Aybee's mind. After all, he may never have another chance like this.

Tasks:

To avoid Xandra's advances without offending her:

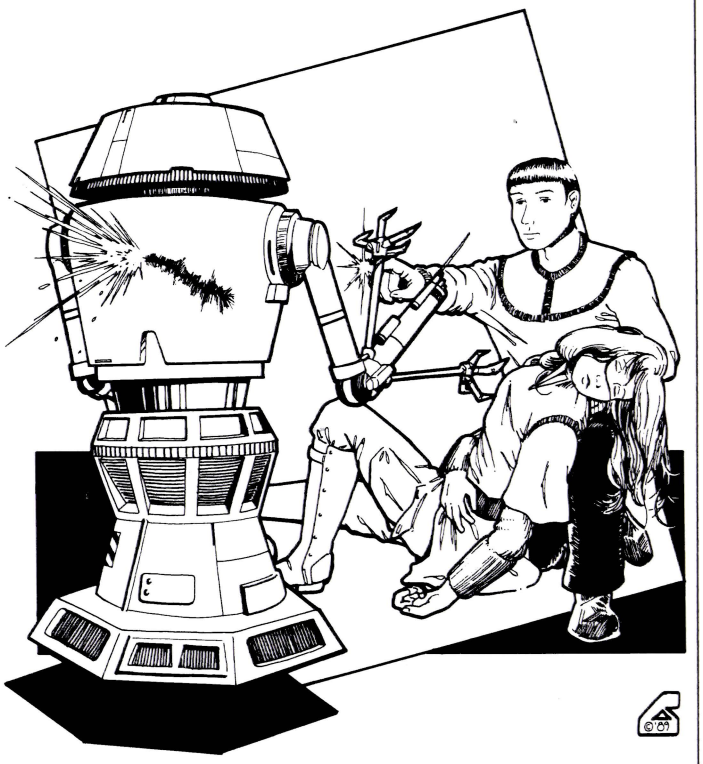
Difficult, Liaison, Soc, 1 minute

Referee: Success does not end her attraction to Aybee, it just means that she has been "ducked" this time.

Referee's Details: The referee should keep in mind that Xandra is a sensitive girl. If she feels that Krenstein does not want her there or that Aybee does not feel the same way for her that she does for him, she will become upset and turn to go. Because of her charm and looks, Xandra has never been turned down by someone she has set her sights on before. If that seems to be happening aboard *Hawking*, she won't know what to do about it.

THE SECOND ACCIDENT
(Use immediately after the Cupid's Darts nugget)

Players' Impressions: One of the ship's laboratory assistant robots walks into the room. Without a word, it strides over to the party. Dame Xandra bends down to talk to it.



"En-Gee, what are you doing here? I thought you were in engineering, getting a software and hardware upgrade?"

Before anyone can act, the robot brings a syringe from behind its back, and thrusts it into Dame Xandra's neck.

Referee's Summary: The lab robot is a Naasirka Labtech668 (as described on page 21 of *101 Robots*) which has fallen prey to the Ancients' Sabotage Robot and been programmed to kill the crew. The drug it has injected into Xandra is a quick acting tranquilizer — in overdose proportions. Only prompt medical attention will save her.

Referee's Details: As soon as the robot drugs Xandra, her eyes roll back in her head and she falls unconscious to the floor. The color drains from her skin and she begins to tremble. The robot turns to Aybee and Krenstein.

As the robot is not a living being, Aybee does not need to wait for Krenstein to give him the go-ahead to employ his laser welder as a weapon. The lab robot will quickly stop functioning if shot. With the wide array of lab equipment around them, Krenstein should have no trouble finding a small laser torch that can be identified as the weapon which stopped the robot. Thus, Aybee's secret is safe from discovery.

Dame Xandra must be rushed to sick bay, or she will die in less than ten minutes. If Krenstein's player is on top of things, he will want to examine the robot "En-Gee" and find out what caused the robot to go bad.

POSTMORTEM
(Use when Krenstein examines En-Gee)

Players' Impressions: The robot En-Gee stands, inoperative, with metal spatters on the floor around it. The pungent smell of melted metal and burnt circuits fills the air.

Referee's Summary: Upon examination, Krenstein will find that the robot's brain was deliberately tampered with. En-Gee's programming has been altered in ominous ways.

Tasks:

To determine what is wrong with the robot using *Hawking*'s lab:
Routine, Robotics, Edu, 2 min (uncertain)

Referee: This task involves comparing the robot's current brain logic with that of the new upgrade. The robot checks out just fine. There is no lab equipment, however, that can test En-Gee's synaptic patterns reliably. Krenstein's hand computer, on the other hand, carries a sophisticated synaptic test pattern program, designed to test Aybee.

To alter the hand computer program to test En-Gee's synaptics:
Difficult, Robotics, Edu, 1 hr (uncertain)

Referee: This task involves some intensive lab work, with Krenstein's hand computer and En-Gee both linked to one of the ship's lab computers.

To locate the deliberate synapse alteration:
Routine, Robotics, Edu, 15 min (uncertain)

Referee: After an intensive search, Krenstein will eventually find the deliberate synapse damage. The effect of the damage is difficult to determine exactly, but it has the effect of rendering the robot "insane". No equipment Krenstein has ever seen can make such subtle, sophisticated alterations in a synaptic brain. The alteration is so precise that it is highly unlikely that it is natural damage.

Referee's Details: Since the robot was in for an upgrade and was last seen at Peka's work station, she will once again be the prime suspect. If Captain Champaign has already confined her to her quarters, a check of the computer records will show that she worked on this robot prior to her confinement. To Krenstein's trained eye, however, the modifications made to the lab robot are quite sophisticated — beyond what one might suspect Peka would be capable of making with her minimal computer skill.

XANDRA'S FATE
(Use while treating Xandra)

Players' Impressions: While Krenstein works to take apart the rogue, Dame Xandra is in sick bay, under Dr. Wasuki's care. Any of the player characters might be present.

"The Kellacyn is a tranquilizer used to slow heart and respiration activity," Wasuki mumbles as he work feverishly over Xandra's limp body. "In this case, the overdose has stilled her body functions entirely. I need to get her on articial life support or she's going to dle in a matter of minutes." *Referee's Summary:* Xandra has been injected with a tranquilizer carried aboard *Hawking* for subduing large captured animals. It is not intended for use on humans and the robot gave her a huge overdose.

Once Xandra's condition is stabilized and the rest of the crew hears of the accident, they will take a great interest in her well-being.

Referee's Details: Kellacyn, the drug which the robot injected into Xandra, has the effect of reducing all muscle activity. In the hands of trained personnel, it slows the heart and respiration, causing unconsciousness. In Xandra's case, it has virtually halted breathing and circulation.

Dr. Wasuki will quickly hook Xandra up to life-support to keep her alive while her heart and lungs are not functioning. After Wasuki administers the antidote, Xandra gradually recovers muscle function. Finally, after an hour and a half of extensive medical care, Xandra is in stable condition, but must remain in sick-bay for a few days.

ALL OUT WAR
(Use after other accidents and the discovery that robot 2 is missing)

Players' Impressions: The lighting suddenly fails, leaving the area in total darkness. The floor gravity suddenly quits, trebles, and quits again. Captain Champaign comes on the vidcom, and the serious malfunction alarm sounds.

"What's going on down there?" the captain shouts.

Referee's Summary: As the search for the robot commences, several areas of the ship begin to experience worsening malfunctions. The crew ends up fighting for their lives against a starship which is slowly going berserk.

Tasks: Define tasks as necessary.

Referee's Details: Use caution in this section. The player characters must feel constantly threatened by the actions of the alien robot, but they must not be killed. Injuring an NPC now and then will go a long way toward making the characters more cautious. For example, the Captain might get a signal from a lab assistant: "there is nothing unusual in this area except for a funny smell ... AIIIRRRGGGHH!"

As the players participate in the search of the ship, they will begin to encounter traps. Depending on which area they search, you might want to design a specific trap. For example, if they are searching through the computer bay, they may find a small unit on the side of the ship's main CPU network. It is rapidly cycling through codes trying to find a way to cause the ship to self-destruct.

Remember the motivations of the alien robot: to cause the ship to destroy itself from a catastophic malfunction. In doing this, the robot will attempt to keep itself in operating condition in hopes that it will eventually be able to wreak havoc on another vessel.

FIREFIGHT
(Use well into the search)

Players' Impressions: Captain Champaign comes on the vidcom. "Peka has cornered the robot in engineering."

Referee's Summary: This is the climax of the adventure. In a fierce exchange of gunfire, the robot will be defeated, and the ship saved. Oddly enough, the credit for the alien's defeat will go largely to Peka, who restrains it long enough for everyone else to get a clear shot at it. Sadly, this also costs her her life.

Referee's Details: When the characters arrive in engineering, they will join Peka and the captain. Peka motions with her gun toward a section of the jump drive. Shortly after the player characters join the group, the robot will come out into the open and will charge the group's position at high speed in a dash for freedom. As it passes overhead, Peka springs onto the robot and grapples with it. Unable to compensate for her extra weight, the robot rolls to the side and slams into the bulkhead. With her arms locked around the robot, Peka rolls to the side, giving the rest of the crew a fairly good shot at the robot's central chassis. As Peka yells to others to open fire, the robot will start blasting her with its laser cutter.

You may have to "wing it" in this section. The robot should be defeated now, whatever the actual effects of the characters' weapons on it. If worst comes to worst, Captain Champaign can always score a direct hit with an HEAP round from her snub pistol "at just the right spot" to bring it down. After it goes down, the robot exudes a stinking black smoke. Further examination will reveal that its brain has been destroyed by a highly corrosive substance, probably to prevent anyone from learning the secrets of its operation.

AFTERMATH
(Use once the alien robot is defeated)

Players' Impressions: Dame Xandra, still in sick bay, has regained consciousness, and asks to speak to Aybee. Once Aybee gets to Xandra's side, she will ask to speak to him in private. Alone with Aybee, she begins to speak slowly.

"Aybee, you are a wonderful guy," Xandra begins, "but as I think about it, I don't believe our relationship will work out. You are intent on travelling with Dr. Krenstein, and I have to finish my studies here."

With that, she reaches for Aybee's hand, holds it for a moment, then kisses it. She looks up at Aybee.

"Goodbye, Aybee. Please leave now."

Referee's Summary: This event gets Aybee (and Krenstein) off the hook with Dame Xandra.

Referee's Details: No doubt, Dame Xandra's accident has brought her back to reality. She now realizes the folly of her infatuation with Aybee.

STROBE LIGHTS
(Final Nugget)

Players' Impressions: Chief Engineer Gerrandur comes onto the vidcom.

"Uh, everyone," he stammers, "you'd better come down to engineering and look at this. I don't like what I've found."

Referee's Summary: The jump drive is in chaos. The ship will prove utterly irreparable and when it emerges from jumpspace (somewhere), the captain will send a distress signal and get her crew to safety with the rescuing vessel.

Tasks: Fake a repair task, but do not tell the group how difficult the task is, and just to add to the tension, tell them it is uncertain. In truth, no task they try will work — the ship is not repairable short of a complete shutdown of all ship systems (even emergency backups).

Referee's Details: When the characters arrive, Gerrandur leads them to an exposed maintenance panel in the system which feeds power into the jump grid. A link has been forged between the ship's main power plant, which is not normally used to supply power to the lanthanum webbing, and the power injection system. It seems to be shunting power to the grid in unusual and seemingly random bursts. A quick examination of the jump drive instrumentation will show that all of the systems are in perfect working order. A more complete examination will show that all of these reading are false and are the result of the robot's tampering with the ship's computer. The drive is in complete chaos.

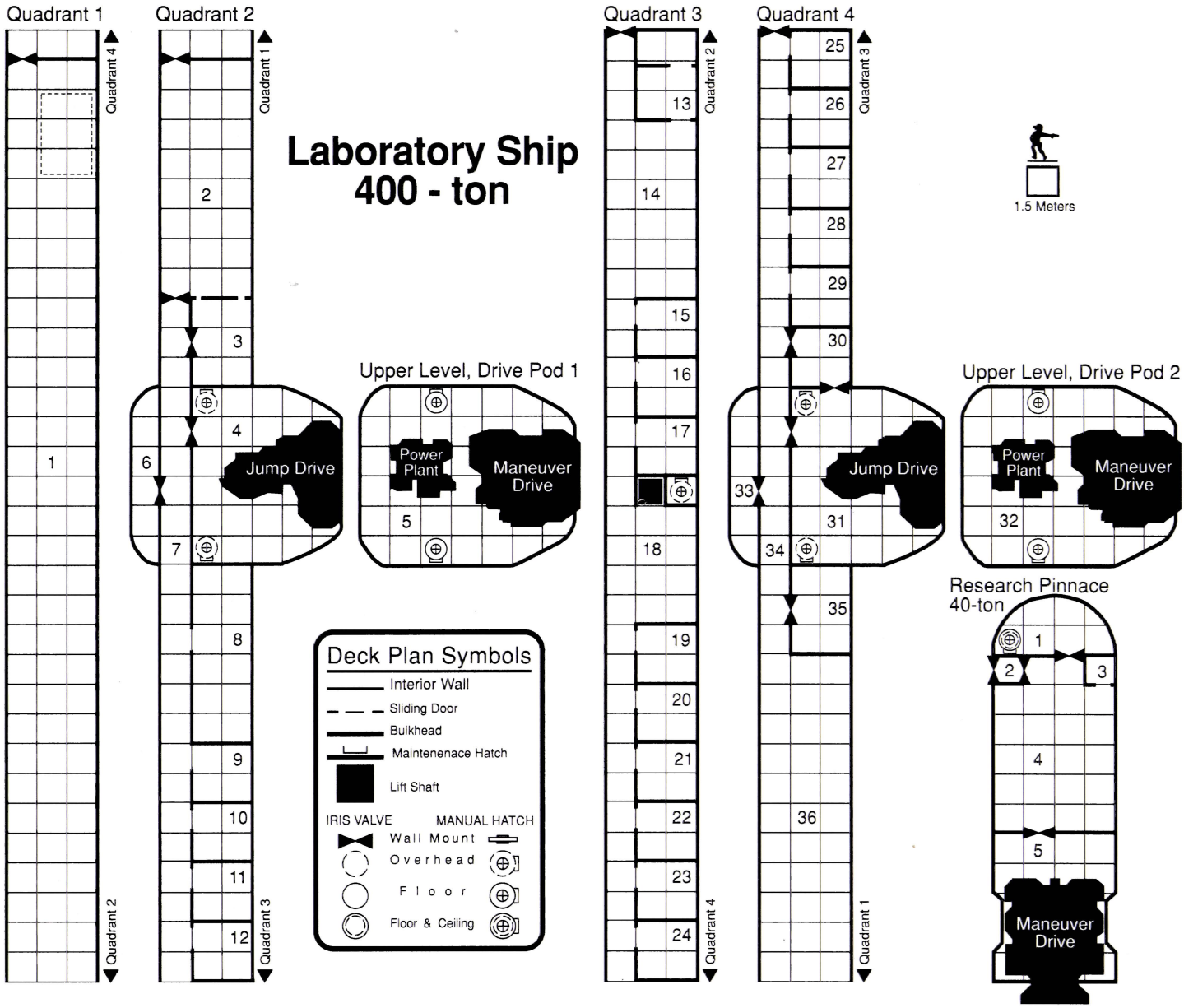
The ship ultimately tumbles out of jumpspace with a violent shock. Few systems are functioning reliably. In desperation, the captain sends out all accepted distress signals.

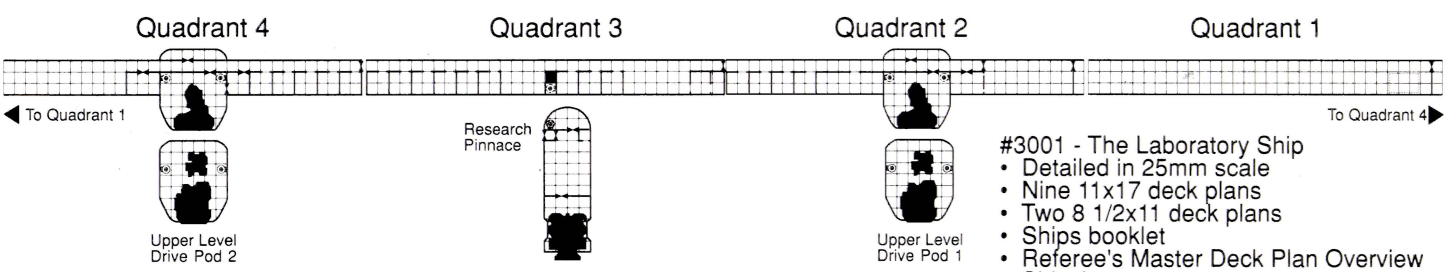
The ship is in a remote system near the border of Reaver's Deep and Dark Nebula. After three days, an Aslan freighter en route to Kusyu with high-priority cargo arrives.

The Aslan offer to drop the crew and passengers of the *Hawking* off on any planet along their route to Kusyu. While the crew of the Hawking will want to get off at the next planet and arrange transport home by contacting New Horizons, for the four player characters, it is a different story.

Kusyu, the Aslan home world. Just think. What a story THAT would make...

REFEREE'S
MASTER DECK PLAN OVERVIEW





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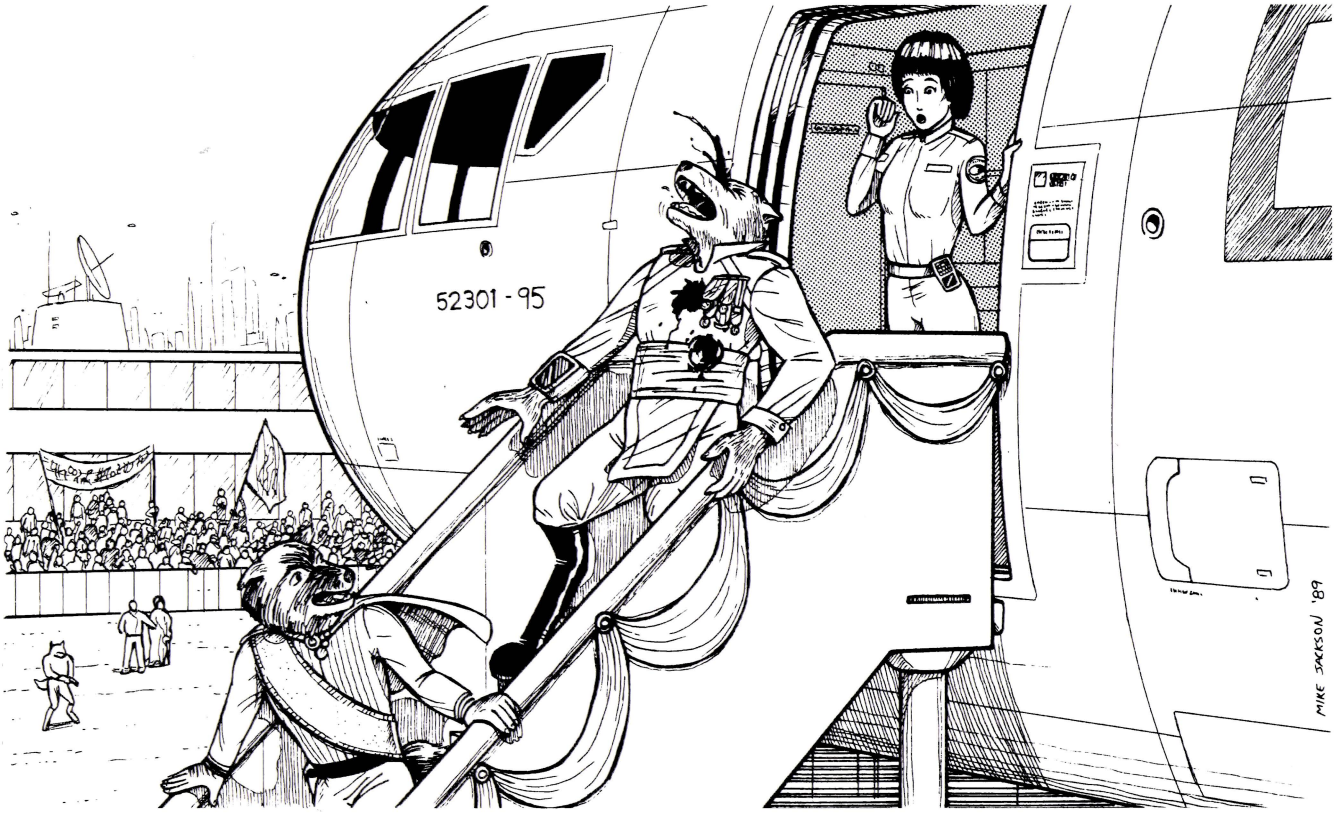
Sword of Arthur

MEGATRAVELLER ADVENTURE
—by William W. Connors



*The third in a series of four **Megatraveller** adventures by William W. Connors.*

THE CHARACTERS

The events in this adventure series center around the crew of the Free Trader *El-ahrairah.* Although *Rah* has been destroyed, the crew remains together out of need and friendship. After travelling to the Walston system, they have entered the service of the Vargr Prince Agzzrgh aboard the patrol cruiser *Swift Executioner.* Exact information on the crew members is as follows:

Kane Woodlow (Owner)
879857 Age 38 5 terms Cr75,000
Navigation-3, Broker-2, Computer-2, Legal-2, Liaison-2, Pilot-1
Starport C, Medium, Dense, Dry, Mod Pop, Low Law, Early Stellar

Kane is a native of the Windsor system who signed on to the crew of a lone tramp freighter when he was a young man. He has proven himself to be a skilled merchant as the years rolled past. Kane is a cunning businessman who takes good care of his crew. "After all," he says," they're my most valuable commodity." He is determined to acquire another ship as soon as possible so that he can return to the life of a free trader.

Belinn Woodlow (Pilot)
5B5746 Age 34 5 terms Cr75,000
Pilot-4, Electronics-2, Prospecting-2, Mechanical-1, Vacc Suit-1
Starport A, Asteroid, Vacuum, Desert, High Pop, Mod Law, Hi Stellar

Belinn is a former Belter from the Glisten system. She is the wife of Kane Woodlow. Although her overly tall and slender physique make her less than a classic beauty, she is an attractive woman with a natural talent for starship operation. Although Belinn sometimes misses her life as a prospector, she is happy in her role as Kane's wife and will do whatever she can to help him get another ship.

Dell Makkashi (Engineer)
76AA78 Age 30 4 terms Cr20,000
Engineer-3, Electronics-2, Gravitics-2, Mechanical-2, Brawling-1, Handgun-1
Starport B, Medium, Thin, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Average Stellar

Dell, a native of the New Rome system, met Kane Woodlow when they both worked aboard the trader *Blue Foxx.* They became very close and later struck out together. When Kane's business expertise earned him the money he needed to purchase *El-ahrairah,* it was simply assumed that Dell would be the ship's engineer. Dell, a quiet and gentle man, has always been fascinated with any type of mechanism.

Tynna Yovanne (Steward/Gunner)
6958A8 Age 24 1.5 terms Cr16,000
Gunnery-2, Steward-2, Liaison-1
Starport C, Medium, Dense, Dry, Mod Pop, Low Law, Early Stellar

Like Kane, Tynna is originally from the Windsor system. She signed aboard *El-ahrairah* several months before its destruction to "see the universe". Her friendly, open nature and good looks have made her a popular addition to the crew. Her skill as a gunner has come in handy on several occasions and Kane feels that the extra expense of a gunner is money well spent. Tynna is always willing to embrace new ideas and consider points of view which might be quite alien to her. She has grown fond of Kane and her other shipmates and has shown no desire to leave them despite the current trend of events.

Drakob Ferassis (Medic)
65A9BB Age 46 8 terms Cr50,000
Admin-3, Medical-3, Computer-2, History-2, Biology-1, Liaison-1,
Starport C, Small, Vacuum, Desert, Low Pop, No Law, Average Stellar

Drakob is from Arba in Lunion Subsector. He has travelled throughout the Spinward Marches, serving as a medical officer aboard numerous vessels. On the average, he has remained with each employer for only a few jumps but he felt very comfortable aboard Rah and plans to stay with Kane and his crew for the near future.

INTRODUCTION

These adventures began in issue number 14 with the adventure "Ghost Ship" and continued in issue 15 with the adventure "Mistaken Identity".

In the first adventure, the characters found themselves stranded in the unpopulated Nirton system following a damaging misjump. Here, they discovered a 300-year old derelict Imperial Navy vessel (the *Sword of Arbellatra*) which, mysteriously, had no entry in *Rah's* computer library.

While they worked to escape from the isolated system by linking the two ships together, Tynna was contacted by what appeared to be the ghost of *Arbellatra's* captain. Through him, she learned that *Arbellatra* had belonged to the Order of the White Star, a company of knights all of whom possessed psionic powers. When the Psionic Suppressions turned the tide of public and governmental sentiment against such groups in the 800s, the Order was betrayed and destroyed by the Imperial military.

As the coupled starships made ready to jump out of the Nirton system, the ghost begged Tynna to see to it that the Order of the White Star was reborn.

The characters made it safely to the Walston system with their rickety vessel. As Walston was listed in their files as an Imperial Client State, they expected to be able to receive help there.

Shortly after their arrival, however, they were challenged by a patrol cruiser and ordered to stand ready to receive boarders. Learning that the planet was inhabited by Vargr who had sworn loyalty to the Imperium, they were soon boarded and searched.

Much to their surprise, they found themselves dragged aboard the cruiser and thrown in the brig. In horror, they watched as their ship was destroyed by laser fire.

On Walston, the characters were brought before a judge and accused of being pirates. Here, they learned that Walston had been attacked several times by raiders from an unknown system who flew ships which bore markings very similar to those found on the *Sword of Arbellatra*.

After proving that they had nothing to do with the attacks, the characters got caught in the midst of a new pirate attack. In order to help the defenders, Kane and Belinn raced off to join the Vargr fleet in a pair of fighters. En route, however, they spotted a lone pirate ship which had broken away from the fleet and was racing toward a remote point on the surface of Walston.

They traced the lone intruder to a point on Walston's surface and destroyed it, discovering a pirate base in the process. A mission to the base later showed that the crew had been undertaking some sort of agricultural processing and that the pirate raids had served as cover for the collection of their products. The exact nature of their work or the identity of the pirates could not be determined.

Once the investigation had been completed, the characters were asked to act as crew on the patrol vessel *Swift Executioner*, and to escort Prince Agzzrgh on a journey to Regina to meet with Archduke Norris. Agzzrgh's goal is to talk to Norris and see if he can get the Imperium to aid Walston in fighting the growing pirate threat. The characters were chosen to crew the *Executioner* because of their knowledge of Imperial protocol, and because the Prince wanted to keep as many Vargr warriors as possible on Walson to ward off the increasing pirate attacks.

The *Executioner* is loaded with a cargo of processed agricultural goods which can be sold in the Imperium for a handsome profit, all of which will go to the characters as payment for their services.

THE CALADBOLG SYSTEM

1329 B365776-A S Ag Ri 710Im F7 V M0 D M4 D

Located in Sword Worlds Subsector of the Spinward Marches (1329), the Caladbolg system is centered around Escalibor, a main sequence F7 star. Two companion stars, both red dwarfs, circle it in distant orbits. Neither of the companions has worlds of its own. The system contains three worlds, no gas giants, and one planetoid belt.

The first orbit is occupied by the system's innermost world, Caliburn. It is a world of extreme temperatures which is wholly unfit for human habitation. It has three moons, all of which are captured fragments of the Broken Stone belt in orbit two.

In the system's second orbital position is the Broken Stone belt. This band of asteroids is unusually diffuse, spreading inward to cross the orbit of Caliburn and outward to just beyond the orbit of Caladbolg. Fragments of the Stone belt fall regularly on the surface of Caliburn and only the ongoing efforts of the system defense fleet divert similar bombardments from the main world of Caladbolg.

In the third orbit is the main world, Caladbolg. Caladbolg sits near the center of the system's habitable zone and has an ideal climate for human habitation. Its atmosphere is pure and ecological legislation is strict. The planet enjoys an active tourist trade and goes to great lengths to promote itself as a modern "Garden of Eden". Much of its economy depends on either the tourist trade or the vast farmlands which cover many portions of the world's surface.

Caladbolg, with a current population of roughly 70 million human beings, was first colonized in -321. Over the

centuries, the people of Caladbolg have developed an agricultural economy and supply important agricultural resources to many worlds in Sword Worlds Subsector.

The citizens of Caladbolg are divided into 17 independent regions known as Colonies. Although there is a degree of competition between the Colonies, they have strong economic ties with each other and friction is minimal. There has never been a major war between them.

Planetary policy is established by the Colonial Congress which meets in an ongoing session in the jointly operated Camelot City, the planet's only major population center. This body regulates any disputes between Colonies that cannot be independently resolved. The System Defense Fleet, composed of citizens from each of the Colonies, answers directly to the Congress.

In addition to providing a meeting place for the Congress, Camelot City is home to the world's only starport. Although this facility is small, it is a sophisticated, high-tech facility.

Caledvwlch, in the fourth orbit, drifts well beyond the limits of Escalibor's habitable zone. Because of the intense conservation laws on Caladbolg itself, much of the system's heavy industry is located on Caledvwlch.

ROYAL WELCOME

With a splash of light, *Swift Executioner* rips free of jump-space and enters the Caladbolg system. The crew complete their post-jump checks as contact is made with Planetary Approach Control in Camelot City.

If the players do not make it clear that their ship is carrying Prince Agzzrgh, an important noble from an Imperial Client state, they will be shunted into a parking orbit and forced to wait for several hours before being given permission to land. The following task governs such an event:

To gain descent clearance from Camelot City Starport:
Routine, Soc, Admin or Liaison, 1 hour

Referee: If the players do make the nature of their business in the system clear, the time interval for this task is changed to 10 minutes.

Once approach permission has been given, the ship will be routed through a long and shallow arc to reach the starport.

THE RED CARPET

As landing checks are made and the ship shuts down its flight circuits, a crowd begins to gather around the ship. Many of them look like reporters. If the players pulled rank to obtain an earlier landing slot, then they can assume that the identity of their passenger has been leaked. If they sat through the longer waiting period to maintain their privacy, they will learn that someone recognized the name of the craft and, again, spread the word that Caladbolg was about to play host to Prince Agzzrgh.

Moments later, two grav limos pull up with a troop carrier. A dozen marines, obviously an honor guard, pile out of the carrier and form up into two lines at the point where *Executioner's* main airlock will open up. From the first of the two limos a group of five men and women, apparently diplomats or similar government officials, steps into view.

If the players take an abnormally long time in getting ready to depart the ship, a grav bus will settle into view and a band will disembark and begin to play various marches and patriotic themes.

Agzzrgh, upon seeing the welcoming committee, will change into his finest robes. This is his chance to make a big splash with the Imperial media and should ultimately help his play for increased assistance from Archduke Norris.

With a flourish, he opens the ship's airlock and steps out into the bright sunlight. A cool breeze is blowing across the landing field and the media begin to film him with vigor. The band strikes up a chorus of "March of the Empire" and the diplomats look with anticipation upon their visitor.

An instant later, Agzzrgh falls backward against the frame of the airlock, grips his chest, and tumbles down onto the starport tarmac.

AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

The onlooking crowd breaks into a panicky disarray from the shock of this sudden turn of events. The marines duck for cover, and begin returning fire with automatic weapons. Agzzrgh has been severely wounded by three gauss rifle bullets, apparently fired by an unknown assassin who is out of sight. Try as the characters might, they will not be able to tell who fired the shots, or find out from where they came. The marines were simply firing at shadows — no one really knew for sure even where the shots that killed Agzzrgh came from.

Agzzrgh's wounds are lethal — he will die within 10 minutes, and there is nothing anyone can do to prevent it.

An instant later, Agzzrgh falls backward against the frame of the airlock, grips his chest, and tumbles down onto the starport tarmac.

Over the course of the next few days the characters will endure the inconveniences of an ongoing police investigation into the attack. Despite the seemingly energetic efforts of the local Enforcers, no evidence turns up as to who the killer may have been or what the motive was.

The referee should hint that the authorities are more interested in closing the file on this case and getting it out of the public's eye than in finding out why Agzzrgh was killed. If the characters attempt their own investigations, they will uncover nothing either, and will annoy any police who discover what the characters are doing. All this delays the sale of the cargo until the investigation is complete.

In the end, the assassination is labeled "a crime committed for reasons unknown". In actual fact, this killing is just an unfortunate incident perpetrated by some locals who hold a grudge against the Vargr on Walston. It has no link to the plot of the adventure and is simply a red herring.

The investigation does serve, however, to get the characters into the public's eye. The characters should be hounded by reporters and strangers of questionable sanity. In the end, the characters may just want to get off Caladbolg.

THIN AIR

Just before the characters leave the world, a lone figure is seen walking up to *Executioner's* main airlock. He steps in and closes the outer door behind him. The airlock starts to cycle.

An examination of the airlock by the characters will show it to be completely empty. As it cycles, they are free to look in through the window on the inner door, activate the sensors inside it, or even direct an NAS sensor at it. All of these procedures, and any others which the clever player characters can think up, will indicate that there is nobody in the airlock.

When the inner door slides open, this is found to be the truth. Whoever walked up to the ship and entered the airlock is gone. On the floor of the lock is a small card.

The small card, made of a thin plastic (a common high-tech method of printing), has on its black plastic surface a white Imperial starburst bisected by a shortsword against a field of stars. Each of the characters instantly recognizes it as the symbol from the *Sword of Arbellatra's* hull: the symbol of the Order of the White Star!

On the back of the card is written:

Cafe LaGrange
Central Plaza West
Level Three / Block Nine
0100 hours

RESEARCH

There are two ways in which the players may learn about the Cafe and its staff before they go there: they may link into the planetary data network and perform a routine library scan or they may hit the streets and find out what the local residents know of it. In both cases the task is similar and the results the same:

To research the Cafe LaGrange:
Routine, Int, Computer (or Streetwise), 1 minute.
Referee: If this task is attempted on the street instead of via the planetary data network, increase the time required to 30 minutes.

A background check of the Cafe will reveal that it is a common enough nightclub located in the heart of Camelot City's busy startown. Although primarily a bar, it has a small kitchen facility and is as popular for the light meals it provides as it is for the drinks it serves.

Unlike many clubs in Camelot City's startown which employ holographic entertainment systems, the Cafe LaGrange has live entertainment in the form of "the lovely Miss Lillyan", a talented singer.

The club's owner, Maxwell Dabner, is a quiet man in his late fifties who is known as a clever businessman. He is careful never to let anyone get the better of him in a business deal, but by the same token, never seems to take advantage of another person. Little is known about his personal life.

THE CAFE

The characters might choose to "case" the Cafe in person or even to hide outside and watch for anything to happen at 0100. In this case the events of "Closing Time" will occur right in their hiding place. If they refuse to go at all, the mysterious disappearing visitor will reappear in their lock to offer the explanations that Lillyan and Dabner would offer at the Cafe.

Referees should go to some lengths to make the atmosphere of the Cafe similar to that of Rick's in the movie *Casablanca*. Dabner has little to do with the patrons but is generally well liked or respected by them and Lillyan spends most of the evening singing songs requested by those at the bar or in the small dining area.

When the characters arrive, Lillyan is in the middle of a song. Although it is typical of those which might be sung in any number of similar establishments, Lillyan is clearly a talented performer.

The characters are led to a table in a dimly lit corner of the bar and their orders are taken. After a few minutes, their drinks arrive and they are left in peace to enjoy Lillyan's show.

Assuming that they take the time to look over the establishment, they will observe nothing to arouse suspicion.

RENDEZVOUS

As Lillyan ends her set, she walks out into the audience and exchanges a few brief words with the regular clients. As she chats she makes her way toward the characters' table and asks if she can join them. For the next few minutes she indulges in idle conversation and asks a few chit-chat questions about their occupations. Without having done anything out of the ordinary, she gets to her feet and explains that she has to go back on stage now for the last set of the evening.

After she has gone, the characters find one of her gloves on their table. Peeking out from one corner of it they find a card like the one which was left in their airlock. On the back of it, in clear script, is the message:

When the Cafe closes, remain at your table. You will be contacted.

CLOSING TIME

After Lillyan's next set the house lights are brought up somewhat and the patrons are thanked for their business. One by one, they make their way out until, after a quarter of an hour, the characters are alone in the Cafe.

Suddenly, a man steps up to their table. None of the characters actually saw him approach — he is just suddenly there.

Identifing himself as Maxwell Dabner, he asks the characters to join him in his office. Leading the characters to the other side of the establishment, he opens a door marked "private" and steps in. When the last of the characters enters, Lillyan steps in behind them (although she was not seen just moments before) and pulls the door shut.

THE ORDER OF THE RED STAR

Dabner and Lillyan offer the characters seats and refreshments before they will answer any questions or go any further with the meeting. Once everyone is comfortable, Dabner smiles slightly and begins to tell the characters who he is and why he has contacted them.

Maxwell Dabner leads a Psionics Institute which traces its history back to time of the Psionic Suppressions. Its creators were members of the Order of the White Star who went underground to escape destruction. Over the years, their Order has acted on its own to preserve the Imperium and itself.

Dabner and Lillyan know the characters have had contact with other members of the Order of the White Star. They read the group's minds, and the White Star image appeared, especially strong in Tynna's mind. They thought they should thus contact the group.

Some months ago, Dabner continues, the Order became aware that another group existed which was similar in origin to his own. Calling itself the Order of the Red Star, this band was also founded by members of the original Order of the White Star. Unlike his own people, however, the founders of this other Order fled from Imperial space and took root in the Sword Worlds.

With the death of the emperor and the resulting confusion in the wake of the Vargr and Aslan incursions, the Order of the Red Star put forth a daring proposal to the Sword Worlds government. By striking against the various Imperial client states which border the now isolated Spinward Marches, a series of carefully planned attacks could so weaken Imperial control over these territories that many of them would turn against the Imperium.

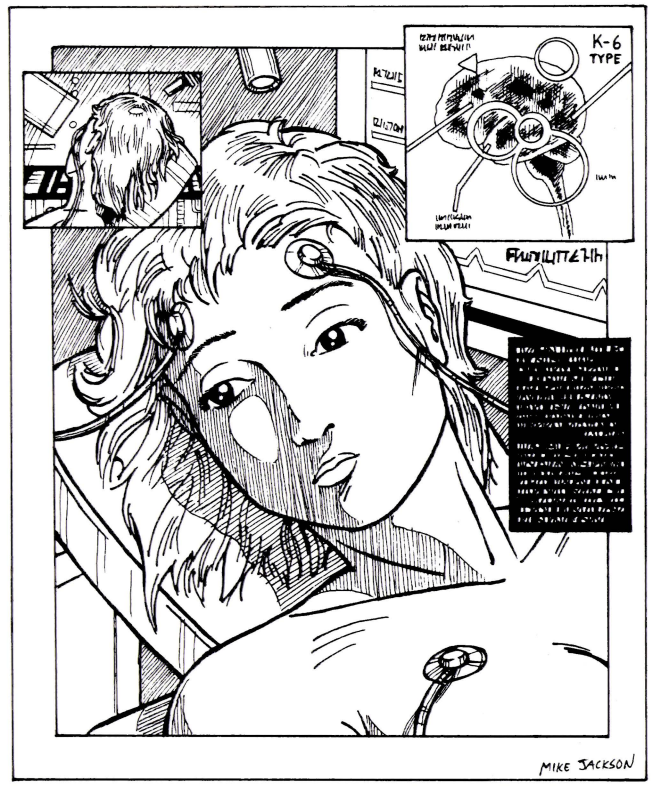
If it became clear that Norris' Imperium could no longer protect or aid its allies, the Order of the White Star's own position would be severely weakened. In the end, the Imperial influence along the border would be greatly diminished and a new Outworld Coalition, this time under the guidance of the Sword Worlds, could ultimately rise up to claim the entire Spinward Marches Sector.

Because the characters were so much in the news, they came to the Order's attention. Lillyan proposed to follow the characters, and to sample their thoughts in hopes of finding if they knew anything of Red Star operatives. Instead, she learned of the character's involvement with the Order of the White Star. Dabner would like to know the details of the characters' encounter. (see "Ghost Ship" in issue 14).

When the police closed their investigation, Lillyan sent a young man out to the character's ship. He walked up to the airlock, dropped the card, and teleported away before the characters were able to spot him.

MANIPULATION

As they finish their explanations, Dabner and Lillyan will offer to test the characters for psionic potential and, if they show promise, begin to train them so that they can officially



join the Order of the White Star. If they accept on the spot, then the referee can just skip ahead to the next section and continue with the adventure.

If the characters refuse, Dabner will try once again to convince them of the importance of keeping the Order alive. He explains that the work which they do is of great importance to the Imperium; if no one takes action to stop the Red Star, it may greatly harm the power of the Iridium Throne in the Marches.

If they still refuse, the referee should make the characters' lives a living hell. A local group connected with the Order of the Red Star will learn about the character's contact with the Order of the White Star and attempt to kill them. The following section covers this option.

Also, during this time, a crew of Vargr from Walston arrive and take the *Swift Executioner* back to Walson, leaving the characters without any form of transportation offworld.

TERRORISTS

Some time after the characters have talked to the White Star group, the characters' rented ACV vehicle will malfunctions and they must work to avoid a damaging crash.

To land safely in the malfunctioning ACV:

Difficult, Hovercraft or Grav Vehicle-1, Dex, 30 sec

Referee: Failure results in crashing into a building, with 1D damage applied to each character's Str, Dex, or End.

On examining the vehicle, the characters (or mechanics or police investigating the crash) will find critical pieces missing from the control system of the craft. Since the ACV worked perfectly until just before the landing or crash and it cannot be controlled at all without these parts, the mystery is when and how the parts could have been removed. Characters are treated and released at a local hospital if needed.

That evening the characters are attacked on the street by three men armed with knives. Play out the combat but see to it that at least one attacker is taken prisoner, if necessary by bringing police on the scene. The prisoner will have no explanation for his actions and no criminal record. He appears confused by what he has done.

The next day, when the characters are by themselves (anywhere), a man suddenly appears before them and fires three shots before disappearing again. No one can grab him since, if they do, he disappears right out of their grasp. Have players roll the following task.

To avoid injury in the attack:
Formidable, Dex, 1 sec (fateful)
Referee: Distribute injuries to all characters failing the task but don't kill any.

As the referee, encourage the players to believe they are being threatened by local members of the opposing Order of the Red Star. Use as many threatening incidents as necessary, if characters are stubborn. If all else fails, have one of the assailants drop a ring or knife. On it will be the symbol of the Red Star.

Police can do nothing for the characters and will be inclined to dismiss suggestions of psionic involvement. The income from their cargo will not buy a ship. No passenger vessel is expected for weeks and no working passages are available on the few freighters that land. Since there are few things as dangerous as a band of psionic terrorists out to kill you and the characters have no way of protecting themselves, they should soon go running back to the White Star with their tails between their legs.

At that point, Dabner will offer them protection in exchange for their enlistment in his cause. (Do they have any other good options?)

DEPARTURE

If the characters express an interest in helping the Order of the White Star (with perhaps some persuasion from the events described above), Dabner and Lillyan will offer the characters room and board. In the shielded quarters of the Order, their presence will not be detectable to Red Star agents, and the White Star is on guard against psionic attacks. A false trail will be laid to indicate that they have gone offworld.

EXAMINATIONS

The examinations procedure is conducted in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the *Players' Manual* and takes two weeks. If the group is interested in doing so, the testing procedure can be roleplayed. The tests employed by the Psionics Institute range from the "guess what's on this card" exercise to a delicate scan of the character's brain and its function.

During the course of their training, the characters will learn a great deal about the Order of the White Star. There are currently fewer than 100 members, dispersed through the Sword Worlds, District 268, and Glisten Subsectors of the Spinward Marches.

Although you will want to make it appear as though you are randomly determining the Psionic Strengths of the characters, the test results for the player characters are as follows:

Kane, Belinn, and Drakob all score very poorly on the tests. All three of them are assigned a psionic strength indicator of 0.

Dell does somewhat better than the first three applicants. He receives a psionic strength indicator of 7. He can be trained in some psionic abilities and shows a distinct talent for clairvoyance.

Tynna (who was contacted by the "ghost" of Sir Phaylenn, remember) scores much higher than any of the others. Her final psionic strength score is 10. Further examination shows she has a talent for telepathy, telekinesis, and awareness. Dabner and Lillyan are both obviously impressed by Tynna's scores.

TRAINING

For the next four months, the characters are kept in isolation in the catacombs beneath Dabner's Cafe.

For those without potential, Dabner and Lillyan provide intense training in skills which "will be invaluable in our battle against the enemies of the Imperium". In game terms, this takes the form of two courses of "Formal Training" as described in the *Players' Manual* (pp. 42-43). The subjects studied are Stealth and Snub Pistol, and the characters are assumed to make the required task rolls to gain a level of 1 in each of the skills.

Tynna and Dell find themselves confronted with a challenging array of tasks and assignments which are designed to increase the control which they have over their psionic abilities. At the end of their training courses they have a good understanding of their powers.

Referees who wish to roleplay this training period are encouraged to do so. The flow of these adventures, however, assumes that the referee will "fast forward" through the time spent under the guidance of Dabner and Lillyan. Although the Order cannot offer official knighthood as it once did, the feeling of belonging and comradeship should be fostered for the characters.

THE REAL WORLD

After the characters have completed their training courses, Dabner calls them into a meeting and informs them that he has a mission which they must undertake. "In a way," he says, "you can think of it as a final exam."

With the flick of a switch, Dabner causes a holographic display of the Spinward Marches to appear. "We have been doing some evaluations of the information which you have given us about the pirates who have been attacking Walston. We came to the conclusion that they must be based in the Enos system. One of our number travelled there and reported that they were, indeed, operating from there."

"Your mission is to travel to Enos and eliminate the pirate threat."

"You will be provided with a ship for this operation. Perform well and the ship will be yours."

To Be Concluded . . .

Finding Players

BEGINNER'S LUCK—*by Daniel Wilson*

Since roleplaying games are group-participation games, an obvious element of having a session is getting some players. However, finding players is often easier said than done.

Why do we have such a hard time finding players for our sessions? Let's delve into that question, and see if we can find some useful, practical tips for finding new players.

FIRST, UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Roleplaying games (RPGs) are not a mainstream hobby like football or camping. The percentage of the general population that is interested is small; few people even know what RPGs are. Depending on the area, the percentage of the population interested in RPGs probably varies from a low of one-tenth of a percent to a high of one or two percent.

Let's say you live in a midwestern farming community of about a thousand people, and the nearest town is 30 miles away. How many RPG gamers potentially exist in town? At the low end, one (one-tenth of a percent). At the high end, ten to twenty (one to two percent). And not all of these existing RPG gamers will want to play a science-fiction game, remember.

"Ten to twenty people?" you may be saying. "Are you kidding? It's more like the one-tenth percent here, and I'm it." That may be true, but I think the one to two percent (the ten to twenty) represents the potential if the interest were high. So how do you generate interest?

GENERATING INTEREST IN MEGATRAVELLER

To generate interest, you are going to have to convince some non-gamers to give Traveller a try. Remember that although you may be fascinated by Traveller, others have other priorities, and are busy. They won't commit to a gigantic campaign that requires that they get together ten hours every week for months on end.

Here are some guidelines I've found work well for convincing non-gamers to come to a Traveller session:

1) Look for people who naturally enjoy science fiction. Trying to convince someone who does not enjoy science fiction is a sure way to fail.

2) Just invite them over to "give this new game a try". Tell them a little about it. You might say, for example, "Traveller is a paper and pencil game, where everybody has a character with certain abilities. You are presented with a situation (like your spaceship has just crashed on an alien world) and you have to work together to resolve the situation."

3) Tell them they don't need to learn or memorize a bunch of rules. Knowing the rules is the referee's job. As players they can just have fun and tell the referee what they want their characters to do.

4) Prepare a small handout to give each attendee before the session — no more than one or two pages. Ideally, distribute the character write-ups (avoid meaningless stats, narrative is better) and a few paragraphs about the game background (see last issue's *Beginner's Luck* column).

5) During the night of the session, keep it down to about four hours. Keep the session moving — and keep it exciting. If you need to, forget about the rules; do what seems reasonable. Above all, avoid explaining the details of the rules. If any player expresses an interest in knowing all the details of a rule, offer to loan him the book after the session.

6) Once the session is over, ask if everybody had fun, and if anyone would "like to do this again sometime". If anyone says yes, suggest doing it again in another one to three months.

"One to three months?" you may ask. "How will I ever get to play anything if we get together only once every few months?" Remember what I said earlier about people being busy? My greatest success in finding permanent players has come when we only get together once every few months. Even busy people can handle a commitment of that level. And for many gamers I've talked to, playing four to six times a year would substantially increase the number of times they get to play Traveller in a year's time.

This is the way I've played Traveller since I started with the game in 1977. Twelve years times roughly 6 sessions a year — I've played in at least 72 sessions over the twelve years. How many of you have played this many sessions of Traveller? I've managed to play (actually ref, I am usually the referee) nearly every Traveller adventure in print at least once. (If you have extra time that you want to spend on Traveller, you can design spaceships, worlds, aliens, NPCs, scanarios, or whatever. Another way is to run more than one group of players, alternating sessions.

CONTACTING PLAYERS

I've tried several ways to contact people who might be interested in playing Traveller. I've run ads in the newspaper. I've put up ads on the bulletin board at the local college or in the local hobby shop or game store. I've told people at work about my "gaming interests". I've talked to my friends from my other activities, like the computer club or church.

Running an ad is the most risky, because you have no idea who is going to respond or what they will be like. Sometimes the ad locates other RPG gamers in town that you didn't know about. Sometimes you will ferret out someone with a strong interest in science fiction who would like to try something new. Once in a while, though, you can get some real fruitcakes.

My best successes have come from cultivating my group of friends. I aim to convince them to "try out this game", and if they like it, I encourage them to join the group. We meet four to six times a year, which is just about right for most busy people.

Some individuals try the game for one session and never come back. That's fine. I think they always enjoy it, but they may not feel they have the time to commit to an ongoing campaign. But others come, enjoy it, and return to future sessions. In my experience, the split is about 50-50. For every two people I convince to come to one of my sessions, one of them will come again to at least one other session.

I firmly believe you need to be cultivating new people for your gaming group all the time, with the ideal being a new person at every other session. If you have four to six sessions in a year's time (like I do), then you should have a total of two or three new people come to your sessions over the course of a year.

I guarantee you will lose people from your group. People move away, change jobs, go off to school, get married, graduate, and so on. These changes alter a person's priorities and commitments. If you just plan on always needing some new blood to replace the natural attrition any group experiences, you'll be rewarded with an ongoing game group and well-attended sessions.

So what are you waiting for? Get out there and invite some people over to a session to try out your favorite game! •

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WHITE WOLF
MAGAZINE

Reavers' Deep Sector

LIBRARY DATA OF THE SECTOR

—by John Theisen and J.Andrew Keith

Farift	Riftdeep	Riftrim	Gulf
Hryaroaa	Scotian Deep	Caledon	Nightrim
Keiar	Ea	Drexilthar	Urlaqqash
Uhtaa	Eakoi	Drinsaar	Fahlnar

Reavers' Deep: Subsector Key

Adwuj: A slightly syrupy beverage, usually served heated, made from the fermented sap of several varieties of trees on Gaajpadje (1124). The bitter-sweet flavor has often been described as a cross between licorice, cinnamon, and burnt wood.

Aeitle Sakh: The Aslan name for Reavers' Deep Sector.

Caledon, Principality of: The largest human-governed state in the sector, closely allied with Imperial interests, residing in the Caledon and Scotian Deep subsectors. Governed by a Constitutional Monarchy, the Principality has enjoyed a reasonably stable history. Often described as a *commercial kingdom*, it is famous for the extent and wealth of its great trading houses.

Caledon Ventures: A growing mercantile firm based in the Principality of Caledon, this company has been one of the major ones responsible for opening new markets within Reavers' Deep Sector. Among other vessels, Caledon operates a number of Type A2 far traders for its exploratory trade missions.

Carrillan Assembly: The second largest human-dominated political entity in the sector, it is composed of a group of federated worlds joined for the mutual regulation of trade, economic coordination, and common defense. The administrative center of the Assembly lies in the Carrillan Belt/Drexilthar (2330): a system which is currently in the grip of an increasingly repressive police state.

Carellines Ltd.: A ruthless and agressive trading firm well know for its determination to turn a profit, no matter what the costs. Though their activities often border on piracy, the loose political structure of the Reavers' Deep has allowed them to continue thriving.

Coventry/Gulf (3207 E686720-5): During a three-century period of the Long Night (circa -1620 to -1320), Coventry was a prison planet , and the site of numerous cruel and lethal biological experiments involving unwilling human and non-human subjects.

Even though nearly two and a half millenia have passed and Coventry is no longer a prison, the fearsome threat of "transport to Coventry" is still used effectively by unscrupulous law enforcement officials in certain Solomani subsectors. So infamous was this planet that one of the conditions of the Peace of Ftahalr was that the Imperium would never upgrade the Coventry starport facility above Class E.

Coventry is now the home for more than 50 million peaceful, hard-working inhabitants (many of them descendants of prisoners). Coventry also exports agroproducts to Imperial worlds of nearby Daibei Sector. Cargo shuttles land at selected marked locations around the globe on Coventry, pick up unmarked pallets (they can be identified only as "from Reavers' Deep"), then depart as quietly as they came. The government of Coventry is a participating democracy with little formally structured legal code. All legal matters are handled at the local level. See also Peace of Ftahalr.

Dakaar Minerals: Typical of many of the large corporations based on independent worlds of the sector, Dakaar Minerals is a far-ranging, unscrupulous organization whose activites are not far removed from the Reavers themselves.

Gaajpadje/Ea (1124 E667874-4): The J'aadje (the planet's native sentient race) population of Gaajpadje is governed by the Gaajpadjet Oligarchs who rule the balkanized city-states of the J'aadje Nations. Inhabiting the East Continent are the K'Tring, a militaristic human race. Tensions between these two groups of inhabitants continue to run high.

A valuable trade site for gems, hand-crafted art objects, and collectibles, Gaajpadje is a non- aligned world and was rarely visited by humans until about a decade ago, when Caledon Ventures opened trade negotiations with the J'aadje. See also Caledon Ventures, J'aadje, K'Tring.

Gruut: The Imperial name for a small (20 kg), herbivorous marsupial reptile, found on the Aslan-inhabited worlds of Oihoiei (0230), Khyaleiftaoaoher (0332), Hrike (0530), and Hrealeiwea' (0531). The female gruut lays up to eight eggs per season — but subsequently eats one or more eggs herself (an unusual instinct-driven reaction, apparently to keep the gruut population from exceeding the local area's ability to support it). The mother places the undevoured eggs in two large hip-pouches where they remain until they hatch.

Once they hatch, the mother cares for the offspring until they are old enough to fend for themselves (about 60 standard days). Nocturnal by nature, gruuts (or kehe'ea, as the Aslan call them) mostly eat watergrasses and some small fruits. To-date, efforts to make pets of them have been unsuccessful.

Halo/Farift (0805 E677000-0): One of the largest concentrations of accessible mineral ore and refinable gases in any system of this sector, the Halo system has five gas giants and two metal-rich asteroid belts. Only recently surveyed by the human firm of Travis Commodities, the Halo system has been the site of increasing amounts of mining activity sponsored by the Aslan Khotoa'ya clan. The system's remote location gives each party equal rights to exploitation of Halo's resources, but the Khotoa'ya's resistance to Travis' presence has become increasingly hostile.

H'Oskhikhil: Indigenous to Storm/Riftdeep (1404), the members of this minor race are disk-shaped, .5 meters high and 1.5 meters across. Their world's eccentric orbit has molded their lifecycle into two major phases: the civilized adult which, after reproducing, is consumed by the voraciously hungry juvenille. This process has kept the race from developing an enduring technological society until relatively recent times, when the adults have been constructing armored, air-conditioned refuges where they can live to pass on their culture and technology to the next generation.

J'aadje: The J'aadje are a non-human minor race native to Gaajpadje. They are small (with an average mass of 60 kg), agile, golden-skinned bipeds. The J'aadje, peaceful and friendly toward each other, are likewise courteous toward off-worlders. J'aadje civilization places little importance on technology, instead stressing art, poetry, and dance. Graceful and delicate artforms and workmanship of high commercial quality are the norm, fetching excellent prices among admiring off-world buyers. See also Gaajpadje.

K'Tring: Warlike human inhabitants comprising part of Gaajpadje's sapient population. Decended from the crash of a warship 2,000 years ago, the K'Tring are believed to be related to the since-vanquished Drexiltharans: one of the last great Reaver states. Currently, the K'Tring are planet-bound, with a tech level of 6.

Mollh, Winchestur (578- 644): Described by some as a hero and by others as a rapacious scoundrel, Winchestur Mollh was by all accounts one of the richest merchant princes in the history of Reavers' Deep. Specializing in the weapons trade, Mollh would also willingly transport desperate passengers who could pay his high prices, with no questions asked.

One of his more succesful schemes would follow this pattern: he would locate a raw material or manufactured product in jeopardy of being captured by a warring faction and offer to buy it for half its worth from its owner — arguing that a small price was better than having the goods confiscated. If the owner eventually gave in, Mollh would transport the goods to another market (usually also near one of the warring factions), make a huge profit, and then repeat the cycle. His buyers usually left him alone because they badly needed his goods and he could deliver as promised.

Mollh was not above stealing military supplies, removing all identifying marks, and reselling them to the highest bidder. In one famous scam, Mollh had several shipments of stolen laser rifles partially disassembled and the firing circuits removed; the rifles were sold to one side as semi-functional weapons, and the missing circuitry was sold to the other side as spares.

Mollh had a philanthropic side. He donated in excess of MCr115 to various charities during his lifetime, and left much of his huge estate to advance the study of psionics. Mollh died in deep space from natural causes. A small holographic memorial exists on his homeworld, Sterling/Scotian Deep (1415).

Peace of Ftahalr: The treaty that ended the Aslan Border Wars (-1118 to 380) and created a 30-parsec-wide buffer zone between the Aslan Hierate and the Third Imperium. This zone indirectly fostered the growth of many smaller interstellar governments and resulted in many independent systems within Reavers' Deep.

Plan Lazarus: A hypothetical military plan of conquest against the Aslan Hierate, commissioned by Emperor Martin III and the Archduke of Sol in 414. Even though the Aslan Border Wars had ended more than three decades earlier, senior Imperial admirals believed the Aslan might try to resume their efforts of expansion. This plan, drawing heavily on Imperial military resources from throughout the Domains of Ilelish and Sol, would only be implemented in the event the Aslan attacked. The plan was in its final year of study when the Ilelish Revolts broke out in 418, and many of the formations assigned to the plan were used during the Revolts. The Aslan never did attack, and when Martin died in 456, Plan Lazarus died with him.

Reavers' Deep Sector, Origin of Name: During the Long Night, this region of space was dominated by petty warlords and pirates, who were collectively referred to as *The Reavers.* Expansion of the Aslan Hierate and Third Imperium along the sector's borders put an end to the Reaver activity, though the numerous neutral worlds of the sector provide haven for pirates and criminals to this day.

Riftgold: A heavy, metallic, mineral compound, riftgold is found on several worlds in subsectors A-D of Reaver's Deep. This substance resembles gold ore when first mined, but turns a dull brown after several months' exposure to oxygen (such as in a standard atmosphere). Riftgold has limited commercial value and is used primarily for novelties. One simple test to distinguish it from real gold (without a spectrograph) is to place a small sample into a high-pressure oxygen chamber for several days and look for signs of "browning" caused by oxidation.

Some superstitious Solomani miners have created an elaborate myth around this compound, calling it "djinn's gold" and attributing a period of bad luck to any who find it.

Saie: A mysterious, non-human civilization which vanished approximately 3,700 years ago, believed to have been based in the Caledon subsector. Few details, beyond their warlike nature, are known about the Saie — most of the existing information being drawn from legends told by some of the sector's indigenous minor races. The search for further evidence of this culture has occupied the interest of a great number of the Principality of Caledon's archeologists.

Tlasayerlaahel: An Aslan merchant corporation controlled by the Yehaso clan of Roaa/Uhtaa (0237). With many interests in the ripe markets at the sector's heart, Tlasaerlaahel traders have been engaging in trade competition with human merchants from the Principality of Caledon.

Teahleikhol: Allied to the Iyhlua clan of the Uhtaa subsector, this Aslan mercenary company has served on tickets throughout the Reavers' Deep.

Virushi: A massive minor race hailing from Virshash/Urlaqqash (2724), they are often described as "centaurs with tank blood" or "intelligent bulldozers". Contrary to what their physical appearance seems to imply, Virushi are pacifistic and (when talking in 1 ATM pressure) soft-spoken. They feel obligated to serve the common good, but can not be ordered to undertake actions against their will.•

URLAQQASH SUBSECTOR

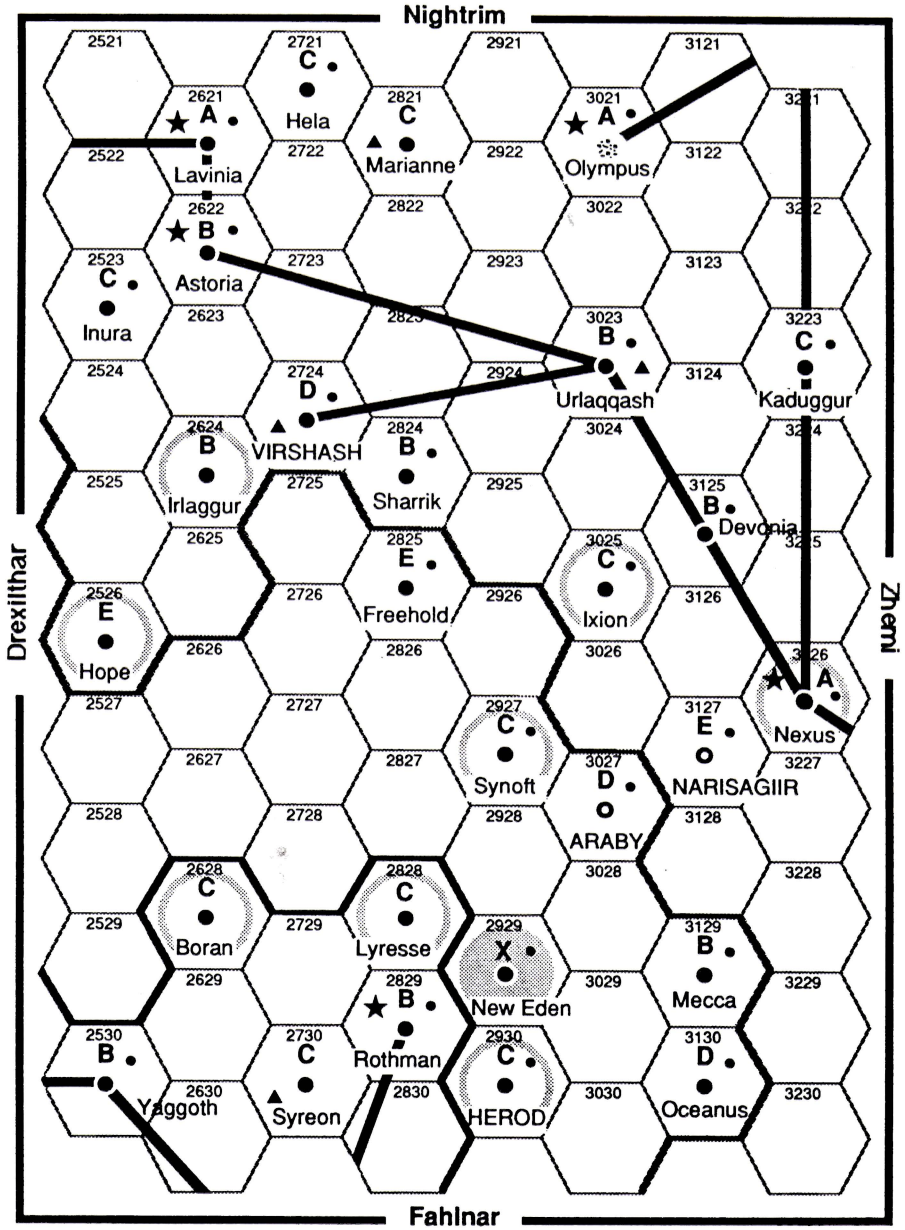
The Urlaqqash subsector (subsector L of Reavers' Deep), dominated by intrusions of both the Third Imperium and the Carrillan Assembly, is one of the more civilized subsectors of Reavers' Deep sector.

Virshash, perching just within the Imperial border, is homeworld to one of the more notable minor races: the Virushi. The influence of Virushi culture and psychology can be felt in many of the neighboring systems.

A small starport is maintained by a consortium of Carrillan trade agencies on Syreon, a world flourishing with Chirpers. Attention has recently focussed on this world as rumors of unethical environmental exploitation by the trading firms have surfaced.

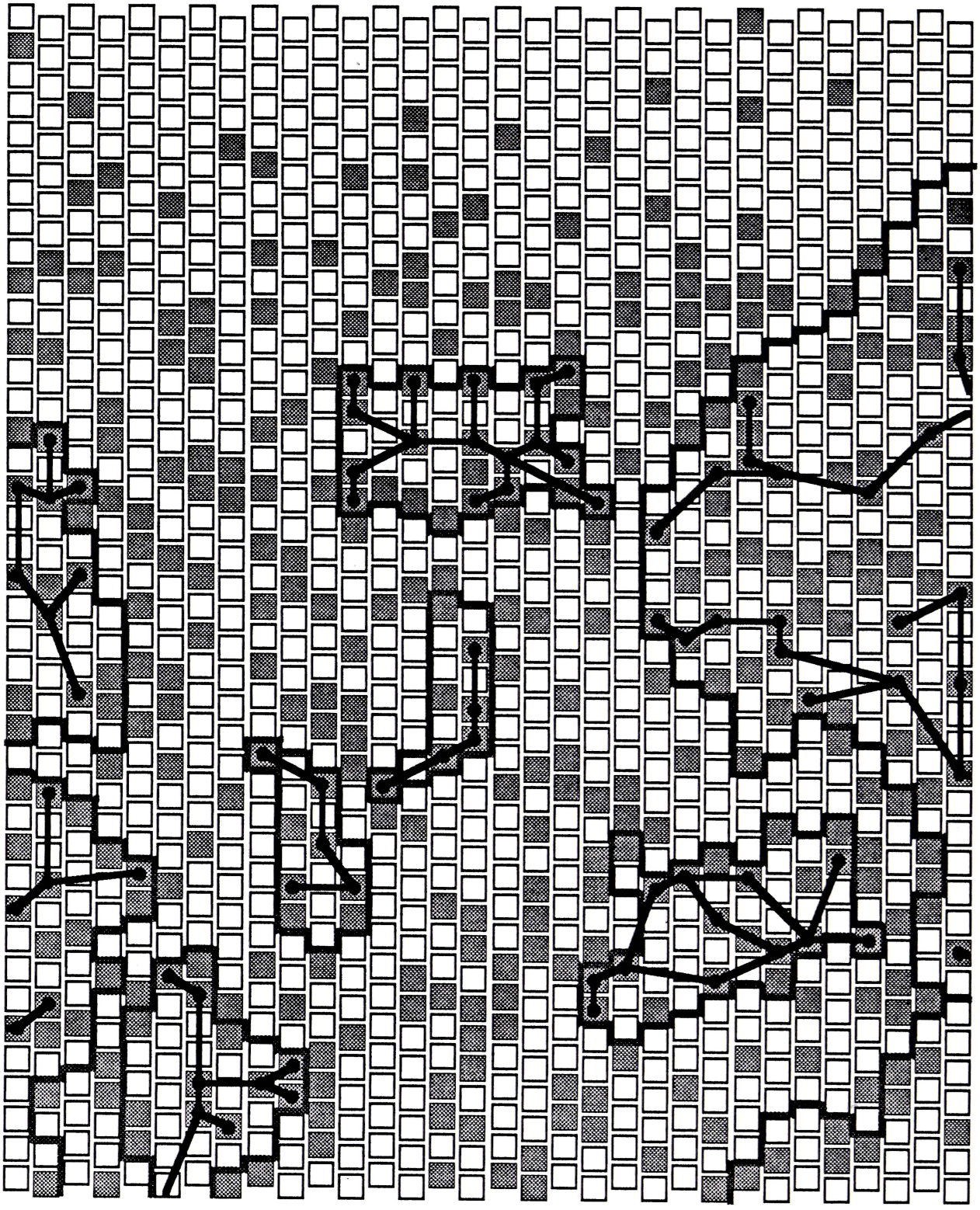
Name	*Location*	*UPP*	*Bases*	*Classifications*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Al*
Inura	2523	C121312-A		Lo Ni Po		812	Im
Hope	2526	E65778B-4		Ag	A	200	Im
Yaggoth	2530	B864756-B		Ag Ri		222	Cb
Lavinia	2621	A446657-E	N	Ag Ni		704	Im
Astoria	2622	B545674-A	N	Ag Ni		201	Im
Irlaggur	2624	B6918CE-A			A	300	Im
Boran	2628	C3135AB-0		Ni Ic	A	300	Cb
Hela	2721	C331300-9		Lo Ni Po		412	Im
Virshash	2724	DA86954-6	S	Hi		403	Im
Syreon	2730	C44618C-8	S	C0		320	Cb
Marianne	2821	C6787C9-8	S	Ag		500	Im
Sharrik	2824	B664896-9		Ri		804	Im
Freehold	2825	E555457-7		Ni		515	Na
Lyresse	2828	C693651-9		Ni	A	810	Cb
Rothman	2829	B796855-9	N			403	Cb
Synoft	2927	C3428CC-7		Po	A	315	Na
New Eden	2929	X4626BC-3		Ni	R	203	Na
Herod	2930	C5569CC-A		Hi	A	723	Na
Olympus	3021	A000567-D	N	Ni As Va		604	Im
Urlaqqash	3023	B788777-9	S	Ag Ri Cp		412	Im
Ixion	3025	C6A1234-9		Lo Ni Fl	A	704	Im
Araby	3027	D3709A9-8		Hi In De		704	Cs
Devonia	3125	B566563-A		Ag Ni		213	Im
Narisagiir	3127	E100943-8		Hi Na In Va		503	Im
Mecca	3129	B858768-8		Ag O:3130		813	Oc
Oceanus	3130	D97A688-6		Ni Wa		402	Oc
Kaduggur	3223	C331231-7		Lo Ni Po		804	Im
Nexus	3226	A2105AA-D	N	Ni	A	712	Im

The Urlaqqash subsector contains 28 worlds with a total population of 27.613 billion. The highest tech level is E at Lavinia. The data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: O:=Owner.



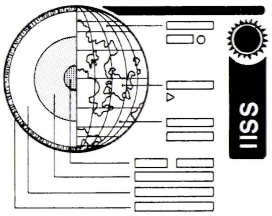
Urlaqqash Subsector

Subsector L of Reavers' Deep



Communication Routes Of The Reavers' Deep

Routes shown within the borders of the Third Imperium are those of the X-Boat network. All Extra-Imperial routes shown are either communication and/or trade routes of other interstellar states.



The Pilgra System

A TRAVELLER'S OVERVIEW
—by John Theisen

Pilgra is the main world in the Pilgaruum star system, located in Massilia Sector. The information below is a summary of information previously released in *The Travellers' Guide to the Imperium, Volume 216: Pilgra* (1118 Edition), revised annually by the Travellers' Aid Society. All visitors travelling to the Pilgaruum star system are encouraged to consult this reference in its entirety to make their trip as enjoyable as possible.

Welcome to Pilgra!

A favorite resort for nobles and the wealthy since the mid-600s, the Massilia sector rec-world of Pilgra is best known for two things: its extremely warm climate and its even warmer hospitality toward visitors. The surface temperature can reach nearly 80° C. during the daytime of an equatorial summer, but even that inhospitable clime cannot diminish the warmth of Pilgran natives when a shipload of tourists arrives from offworld. To these fortunate guests, Pilgra quickly comes to mean friendship, fine food and drink, exciting games and sports, and some of the most lavishly constructed underground cities to be found anywhere.

GOVERNMENT

Form of Government

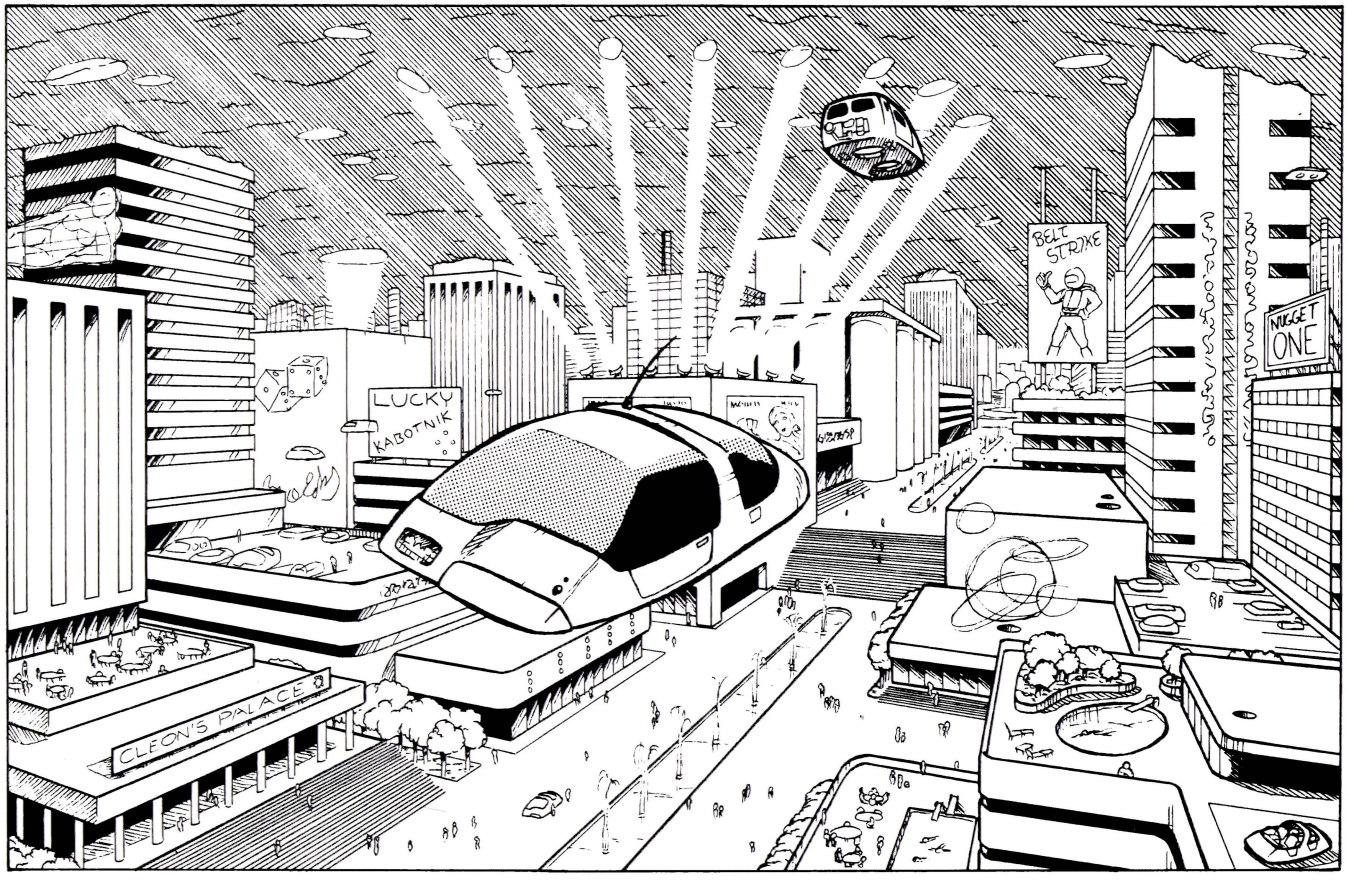
The government consists of numerous councils, or "authorities," with defined areas of duties and responsibilities. Emphasis is placed on administering services and enforcing laws, with lesser emphasis on creating new laws.

To a visitor, much of the Pilgran government should go unnoticed. The authorities that visitors will have the most contact with are: 1) the Pilgran Space and Transit Authority, which operates the starports and all traffic control networks; 2) the Pilgran Tourism Authority (a combination Visitor's Bureau and Chamber of Commerce), which provides information, guidance, and support to anyone visiting the system; and 3) the Pilgran Enforcement Authority (the police), whose members are always willing to lend a hand or give directions, in addition to their regular duties.

Entry/Exit Procedures

All visitors who come to Pilgra by commercial transport arrive at the orbital city of Yin. There they are cleared through customs and shuttled down to the primary city of their choice. Upon leaving Pilgra, visitors are shuttled up to Yang, where they are again cleared through customs and embark on their flight home. Customs checks rarely take long and are made as pleasant as possible by hosts and hostesses trained in serving the needs of travellers.

Visitors arriving via private vessels, such as yachts, are permitted to land at the Lutem or Angim surface spaceports, where they undergo the same procedure. All visitors must be cleared through one of the four major spaceports.



Local Law Enforcement

Pilgra, recognizing the vital importance of tourism, has even enacted two levels of law: one for their own citizens, and one for non-citizens (specifically, visitors to Pilgra). In every respect, the non-citizens are subject to fewer restrictions and lighter penalties when in violation. (The law levels shown in parentheses are those which apply to citizens.) Weapons are discouraged, and guests bearing arms will have their weapons stored at the spaceport until departure.

Law enforcement agents will not ignore flagrant offenses, but they do try to turn a blind eye if doing so can avoid major embarrassment for the honored guest. However, Pilgran law carefully protects its service industries, particularly eating, sleeping, and gambling establishments; any attempt to defraud an innkeeper, forge documents or currency, or cheat at games, for example, will be harshly dealt with regardless of one's citizenship or standing. It is also worth mentioning that the planetary charter refuses any form of immunity for nobles in this matter; when Count Marco (a distant cousin of then-Emperor Gavin) was found guilty of cheating at a high-stakes card game in 992, he served an eight-year prison term, as anyone else would have done.

Non-Pilgrans who remain for more than half a Pilgran year are reclassified as Pilgran citizens, are given ident bracelets, and are subject to the stricter enforcement codes. (All Pilgran citizens must wear an ident bracelet at all times; failure to wear or openly display the bracelet is a serious offense.)

CLIMATE, CULTURE, AND CUISINE

Climate

Pilgra is an extremely warm world. It experiences mild nights, scorching days, and long, hot summers. As a result, the polar regions are heavily inhabited, and the world's few major bodies of water and rivers are located in the higher latitudes. The cities of Angim and Hyklar are located near the north pole, and Lutem, Carmel and Kishab near the south; the equatorial regions are desert or scrubland.

Pilgra consists of a single tectonic plate, and has no natural satellites; thus there are few tremors, minimal tides, and little mountain-building. From space the planet appears as a smooth, relatively featureless, tan-colored sphere with spots of oceanic blue and vegetative green near the poles.

The harshness of Pilgra's climate proved troublesome to the first colonists. Instead of trying to reshape Pilgra through terraforming, however, they built elaborate near-polar cities underground. These cities are widely dispersed, with thousands of miles of connecting tunnels and subsurface mass transit systems; in most cases, only spaceports, emergency service facilities, and factories exist on the surface. Pilgrans live much of their lives in roomy, comfortable complexes several hundred meters below the surface.

Culture and Social Customs

"Any visitor can feel like royalty!" So reads a Pilgran promotional brochure, and the cliche is not exaggerated by very much. From the moment tourists step through the airlock on Yin until they leave its sister-city, every practical whim is attended to—often at surprisingly reasonable cost.

A peaceful and sociable people, Pilgrans genuinely love company—all kinds, and the more the merrier. Pilgrans are more than willing to share what they have with all who care to partake, and always in the spirit of good grace.

Good manners and social maturity mark the world's culture. If tourists are ignorant of some code of conduct, the natives will courteously instruct them. Pilgrans are willing to accept change, however. At every public facility is a data terminal which accepts suggestions on ways to improve service or cut unnecessary costs. Such suggestions occasionally result in credit awards to the benefactor.

The sense of ambition is strong, but it is cautiously tempered by a desire to remain "polite"; excessive profit is perceived as being "rude". (Admittedly, this perception is more widely held by private entrepreneurs and corporations than by the Pilgran government.) The use of force, either in business or by the military, is not wholly unthinkable, but most Pilgrans prefer diplomatic measures when possible.

Dining Customs

Though temperatures within the underground cities are mild and comfortable, the daytime heat has had a profound effect on meal schedules. Pilgrans traditionally eat an enormous breakfast, then a very light noon meal often accompanied by an exotic selection of beverages, finishing the day with a fairly large supper served within four hours of retiring. Hotels provide around-the-clock meals, but many Pilgrans gently prompt visitors to follow their own custom.

For guests, meals are invariably an all-one-can-eat affair, especially at breakfast; large platters of meats, fruits, breads, and spices adorn the dining area. For Pilgrans, eating is often a graphic masterpiece as well as a culinary delight, and a gourmet five-course meal usually costs less than Cr15 per person.

Cultural Events

Several hundred major cultural events, including music and dance, optic and sonic art, and live dramatic performances, are sponsored annually by the Pilgran Art Development Authority. These events are all licensed, and individual admission fees range from a few credits to several hundred. Unlicensed shows, though not illegal, are discouraged because of their "dubious quality".

TRADE, COMMERCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Economy and Industry

The driving force behind the Pilgran economic system is the offworld tourist. As a result, Pilgra has a strong service-oriented economy, with relatively small agricultural, mining, and manufacturing sectors. Approximately 80 percent of the government's revenue comes from a flat 17.5 percent Planetary Services Tax, or PST, applied to all goods and services sold on Pilgra at the retail level. (Most of the remaining 20 percent is profit from government-owned businesses, such as Pilgra Portal Tourlines.) This relatively high sales tax rate is compensated by an absence of income or property taxes.

The planet is marginally self-sufficient in agroproducts, not capable of exporting food but not requiring imports to support the native and visiting populations. The latter is not a minor consideration; as many as one million visitors may be on Pilgra at any given time. There is no off-season, since both polar regions are equally popular with tourists. Many workers in the summer "off-season" polar region hold part-time positions in other fields; a valet for tourists may teach school during the other half of the year, for example.

The manufacture of mechanical parts and heavy equipment dominates Pilgra's limited industrial activity. Pilgran workers produce high-quality TL 12 and TL 13 mining and agricultural equipment for use on other high-temperature worlds. Pilgran components are known for their craftsmanship and durability under adverse weather conditions.

Most factories are located at distant surface sites, up to 300 km from the nearest urban area. This keeps undesirable by-products of manufacturing (such as heat and noise) from having a detrimental effect on the tourist trade.

Trade and Technology Profile

Pilgrans love gadgets—the more exotic, the better. The device need not be functional as long as it looks interesting, emits peculiar lights, noises, or scents, or seems unique in design. Pilgran artisans have raised bric-a-brac to a fine art, and they appreciate fine craftsmanship when they see it. Luxury goods always fetch a good price on Pilgra, and they are often resold within weeks at a Pilgran shop. (Trinkets of Zhodani or Aslan make are particularly in vogue.)

Except for those who prefer less sophisticated vehicles or equipment, virtually everything used in daily life meets TL 13 standards. Electronic, communication, and medical equipment is well-developed, and both Lutem and Angim maintain some of the finest medical facilities in the Imperium. Space transport is just entering TL 16 technology.

Pilgra is classified as a non-industrial, rich world.

Currency

Pilgra produces a baffling variety of currency: polyfiber bills, plastic, and aluminum coins, in many different denominations. Though the exchange rate between Pilgran and Imperial currency is consistently 1:1, the Pilgrans continue to manufacture "hard" coinage, mostly for the recreational trade. According to one journal, "psychosocial experiments with gambling machines have proven that partial positive reinforcement is substantially more effective when involving as many sensory paths as possible." In plain language, guests consistently play coin-operated machines more often than credit-card-operated machines because of the clinking sounds and the solid feel of money from payoffs.

Trade Customs and Regulations

Visitors to Pilgra may take up to Cr5,000 worth of merchandise per person away with them. PST must be paid on all goods at the time of purchase. Amounts in excess of Cr5,000 are assessed a duty fee at the rate of 1.75 percent of value, payable on departure.

Visitors who wish to conduct commercial trade must contact the Pilgran Commerce Authority and purchase a broker's license (Cr2,000 fee) or work through a native broker.

There is no limit on the amount of local currency that can be taken out of the Pilgaruum star system. As local currency is difficult to exchange offworld, however, its primary value is as souvenirs.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Places to Eat and Stay

There are hundreds of fine restaurants and hotels in every major city on Pilgra. Cuisine ranges from plain-and-hearty to wildly exotic, and hotels range from simple rooms to luxury accommodations costing several thousand credits per night. Ordinary meals and lodging can be found for very moderate prices: huge breakfasts for under Cr4, and well-equipped rooms for Cr20-35 per night.

Forms of Recreation

Sports (especially low-gravity events, where Pilgra's natural 0.37g field can enhance the competition) are very popular on this planet—for participants, spectators, and bettors. The whang-sticks tournaments, among others, are common in the fall and winter seasons.

For those seeking excitement, perhaps the most famous chain of casinos is Pilgra's Progress, with branches located in Angim, Hyklar, and Lutem. All gambling halls on Pilgra are government owned, and the "house" take goes to the treasury. In addition, all winnings in excess of Cr500 have the PST levied against them. The games are fair, and big winners are a common sight. At least 15 percent of the government's budget comes from gambling profits.

TOURS AND EXCURSIONS

In-City

A number of tourcenters operate in the major cities, some privately owned and others under government control. Both are good bargains and offer similar services; the private tours are slightly cheaper but the government tours offer indemnity protection (if anything happens to a guest on tour, the next of kin will be well provided for).

Nearby Attractions

Game hunting provides one major attraction that cannot be found within the confines of Pilgran cities. Native life consists of several varieties of desert animal, most notably the ramalliot, a large pouncer with ape-like intelligence commonly found in the mid-to-upper latitudes. Prolific in the wild, it is a common target of tourists who enjoy an exciting and often dangerous hunt. A smaller game animal, the omnivorous rodentlike desert scew, is also widely hunted, and its flesh is considered an exquisite delicacy by many.

Legal expeditions must include a licensed tour guide and one officer from the Pilgran Enforcement Authority; weapons are provided by the tourcenter, and these vary from trip to trip. (This is a carefully-controlled exception to the Pilgran no-weapons rule, again, in the interest of tourism.)

Forms of Transportation

A subsurface pneumatic rail system operates in all primary and secondary cities. The rail systems of nearby cities often interconnect. Cost is based on zone fees, and ticket prices work out to approximately one-quarter credit per kilometer. Non-motorized vehicles may be rented for use in the accessways, but motorized vehicles for personal subsurface use are prohibited.

A variety of vehicles are also available for surface transportation: unarmed *Horronon* (TL10) ATVs and *Resolve* (TL12) G-carriers, *Quest* (TL10) and *Cova*(TL11) air/rafts, *Tavee-Gho* (TL11) recreational ACVs, and *Wanderer* (TL13) airbuses. Daily rental fees range from Cr225 for a *Quest* or Cr350 for a *Horronon*, up to Cr,1000 for a *Resolve* or Cr1,500 for a *Tavee-Gho*; weekly rates are reduced about 30 percent.

Other Planets In-System

There is only one noteworthy attraction in the Pilgaruum system off Pilgra proper. The Star Belt of Belez is an asteroidal debris belt orbiting the gas giant Shadev. Through processes still not understood by Imperial astrophysicists, a high percentage (but not all) of the belt's ice and rock particles are star-shaped, roughly analogous to snow crystals. Interplanetary touring craft often carry low-intensity lasers, which they fire into the belt. The laserlight strikes some of the moving ice crystals, which reflect or refract the light to strike others. The everchanging pyrotechnics provide an entertaining kaleidoscopic light show for tourists—without risk to the ship, its passengers, or the belt itself.

Margaret's navy maintains a large high-temperature lab on Intod. This lab is reportedly used for testing such equipment as vacc suits, starship hull shielding, and high-energy plasma weapons. Exact details of this research are classified and no visitors are permitted.

THE SPACEPORT

Facilities and Accessibility

Pilgra maintains four starports with Class A facilities: in the cities Yin and Yang in high Pilgran orbit, and at Lutem and Angim. Pilgra is located near the "end" of the Kagara Tip, a region of jump-1 accessible star systems in parts of four Massilia and Core subsectors. Everything about the starports is run with efficiency and care; the accommodations are uniformly first-rate and reasonably priced.

Berthing Costs and Regulations

Berthing costs at the Pilgran surface spaceports are among the very lowest in the Imperium; a flat Cr50 arrival-and-departure fee for private vessels, and Cr20 per week ground berthing fees. However, the Pilgran's notion of "berthing" often means simply a level spot to park the ship, with no services included except ground security (additional services are available at a nominal charge). There are no facilities for berthing private vessels at Yin or Yang.

Starlines

Pilgra is a major scheduled stop for two interstellar passenger transport companies. Tukera Lines maintains regular weekly flights to Arar (Massilia 1104) and bimonthly flights to Douro (Massilia 1304). The liners Tukera uses in this area are often of second-rate quality and comfort, though safety is never compromised. Company spokespersons apologetically claim that better-equipped liners would not be cost-effective in this area. However, Tukera often offers discount programs which reduce ticket cost by 5 to 15 percent (check with local agents or the Pilgran Tourism Authority for availability information).

The other company is the government-owned Pilgra Portal Tourlines. This firm is best known for its luxury transport fleet of jump-6 cruiseliners, with monthly non-stop direct flight service from Aagkhuur (Massilia 0802), Arar (Massilia 1104), Khipshunam (Massilia 1108), Yagas (Massilia 0707), and Night (Core 0839). This fleet forms the backbone of the PPT Nobility Package, one of the most elegant, all-inclusive travel programs available anywhere in the Imperium.

In the Nobility Package, passengers arrive at Pilgra on one flight, then stay for a month and leave on the next outgoing flight. Total package cost per person for round-trip flight tickets, hotel accommodations (two meals included daily), personal valet or maid, personal vehicle rental, unlimited charter touring of Pilgra, and free admission to all licensed cultural events and points-of-interest is Cr100,000 (PST and all gratuities included). Additional meals and gambling expenses are, of course, extra.

Finally, dozens of smaller transport companies offer unscheduled or irregularly-scheduled charter tours to Pilgra.

STAR SYSTEM DATA

Name/Location: Pilgra/Arar/Massilia 1203

Orbit	*Name*	*UWP*	*Remarks*
Primary	Pilgarum	F5V	Magnitude 3.4
0	Selec	YS000000	
1	Intod	HS00324D	Research Lab
2	Ridev	SmallGG	
5	Dulest	YS000000	
6	Charom	YS000000	
8	Incenne	YS000000	
40	Tawshin	Y6200000	
3	Shadev	Large GG	
2	Belez	YR000000	ring ("Star Belt")
4	Wangir	Y7300000	
6	Kurtz	Y5200000	
7	Humel	YS000000	
8	Luce	Y3000000	
9	Erze	Y3000000	
10	Donnin	Y7000000	
11	Dicalt	Y3000000	
41	Dezon	Y5200000	
42	Darkland	Y3100000	
104	Parnol	Y4000000	
4	Pilgra	A362686D	

World Name: Pilgra
Location: Massilia Sector 1203
UPP: A362686-D
Allegiance: Margaret

Physical Data:
Diameter: 4760 km
Density: 1.01 standard
Mass: 0.051 standard
Surface Gravity: 0.37g
Rotation Period: 50 hrs, 9 min, 37 sec
Orbital Period: 648.33 standard days
Seasons: Summer, Winter (160.9 days each) Spring, Autumn (163.3 days each)
Axial Tilt: 29° 20" 24.2"
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.015
Satellites: none
Surface Atm Pressure: 1.00 standard atm
Atm Composition: Standard oxygen-nitrogen mix
Atm Terraforming: No
Hyd Percentage: 18%
Hyd Composition: No

Temperature:
Base Surface Temp: 51.7°C
Axial Tilt Modifiers: +17.6°C, -29.3°C
Rotation Modifiers: +12.5°C, -25.0°C
Latitude Modifiers: 4.5°C per hex row
Orbital Eccentricity : +0.4°C, -0.4°C
Other Modifiers: None
Weather Control: No
Grnhouse Terraforming: No
Albedo Terraforming: No

Mapping Data:
Nbr Tectonic Plates: 1 (100%)
Native Life: Yes
Terrain Terraforming: No
Major Continents: World
Minor Continents: World
Major Oceans: 1
Minor Oceans: 1 (9 small seas, 9 scattered lakes)

Seismic Data:
Stress Factor: 0
Notable Volcanoes: 0 active (all extinct)

Resources:
Natural Resources: Agricultural, Ores, Petrochemicals
Processed Resources: Agricultural, Alloys, Agroproducts
Manufactured Products: Mechanical Parts, Heavy Equipment

Population&Ports:
World Population: 5,909,000
Primary Cities: Lutem; 917,000; class A
Angim; 954,000; class A
Hyklar; 677,000; class B
Carmel; 350,000; class C
Kishab; 323,000; class C
Secondary Cities: 30, circa 50,000; class F
Tertiary Cities: 195 cities, circa 5,000
Orbital Cities: Yin; 29,100; class A
Yang; 18,800; class A

GRAND CENSUS CULTURAL PROFILE
World Name: Pilgra
Location: Massilia Sector 1203
UPP: A362686-D
Allegiance: Margaret

Cultural Profile:
Progressiveness-Att: Progressive
Progressiveness-Act: Advancing
Aggressiveness-Att: Unaggressive
Aggressiveness-Act: Neutral
Global Extent: Harmonious
Interstellar Extent: Xenophilic

Technology Profile:
High Common: D
Low Common: D
Energy: D
Computers/Robotics: F
Communications: F
Medical: F
Environment: D
Land Transport: D
Water Transport: D
Air Transport: D
Space Transport: G
Personal Weapons: E
Heavy Weapons: D
Novelty: F

Government Division of Authority:
Represent. Authorities: Executive (Several Councils), Legislative (Several Councils)
Other Authority: Judicial (Several Councils)

Law Level:
Overall: 6 (8 for citizens)
Weapons: 9 (11)
Trade: 6 (9)
Criminal Law: 7 (9)
Civil Law: 5 (7)
Personal Freedom: 2 (5)
Uniformity: Territorial

Has Your Address Changed?
Don't Miss out on Any Issues of The Travellers' Digest!

My New Address is:

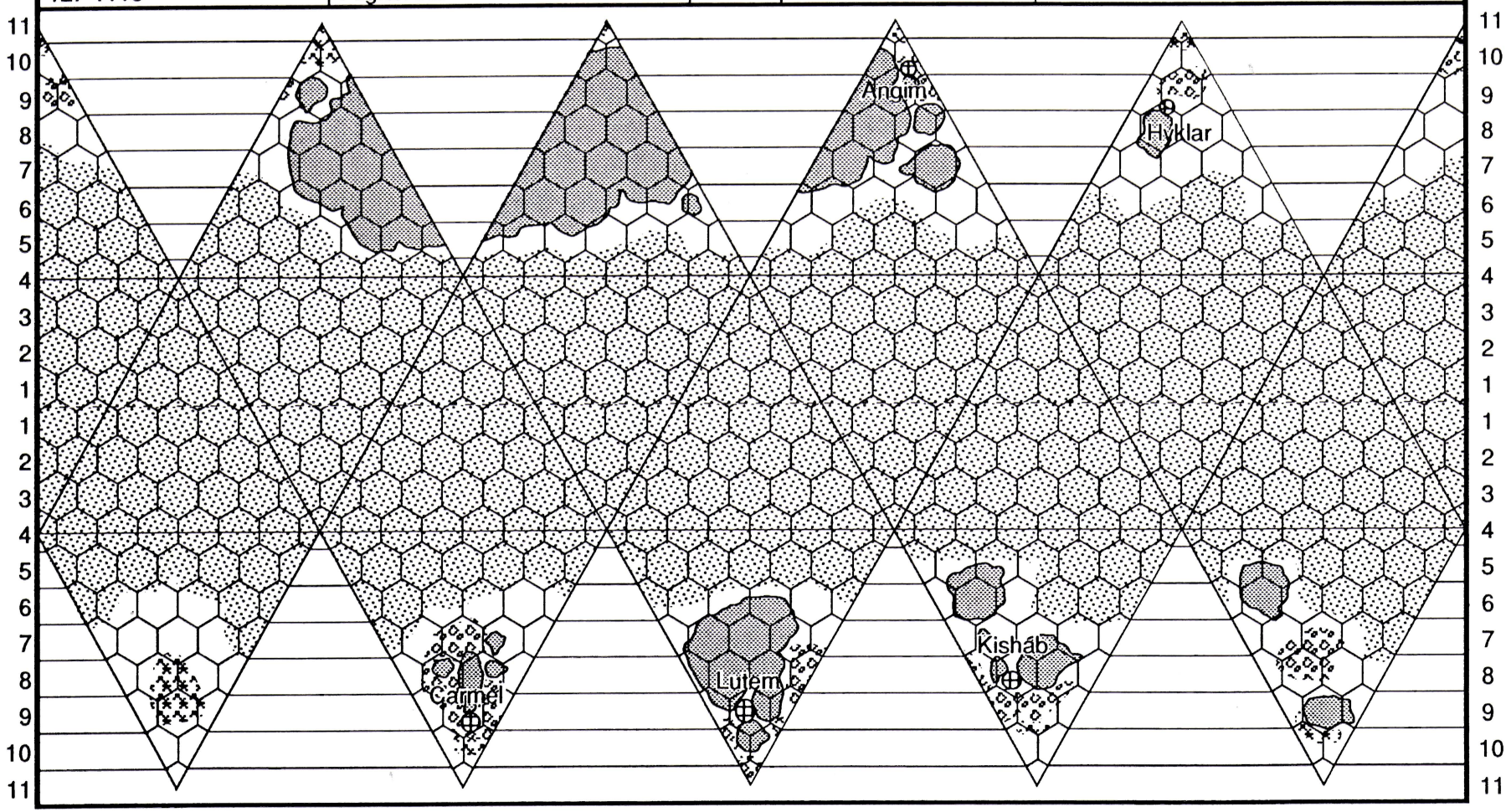
_____

_____

WORLD MAP GRID

This geodesic map grid divides the spherical surface of any globe into twenty triangles, each of which is further divided into hexagons. Note terrain identities and other planetographic features of the world in these hexagons. Total number of map hexes per triangle: 25. Total number of map hexes: 500.

1. Date of Preparation	2. World Name *(and UPP)*		3. Hexagon Scale in Kilometers (circumference divided by 35)	4. Subsector and Sector Location of World
127-1118	Pilgra/Arar	A3626866D	427 km per hex	Arar/Massilia 1203



IS Form 21

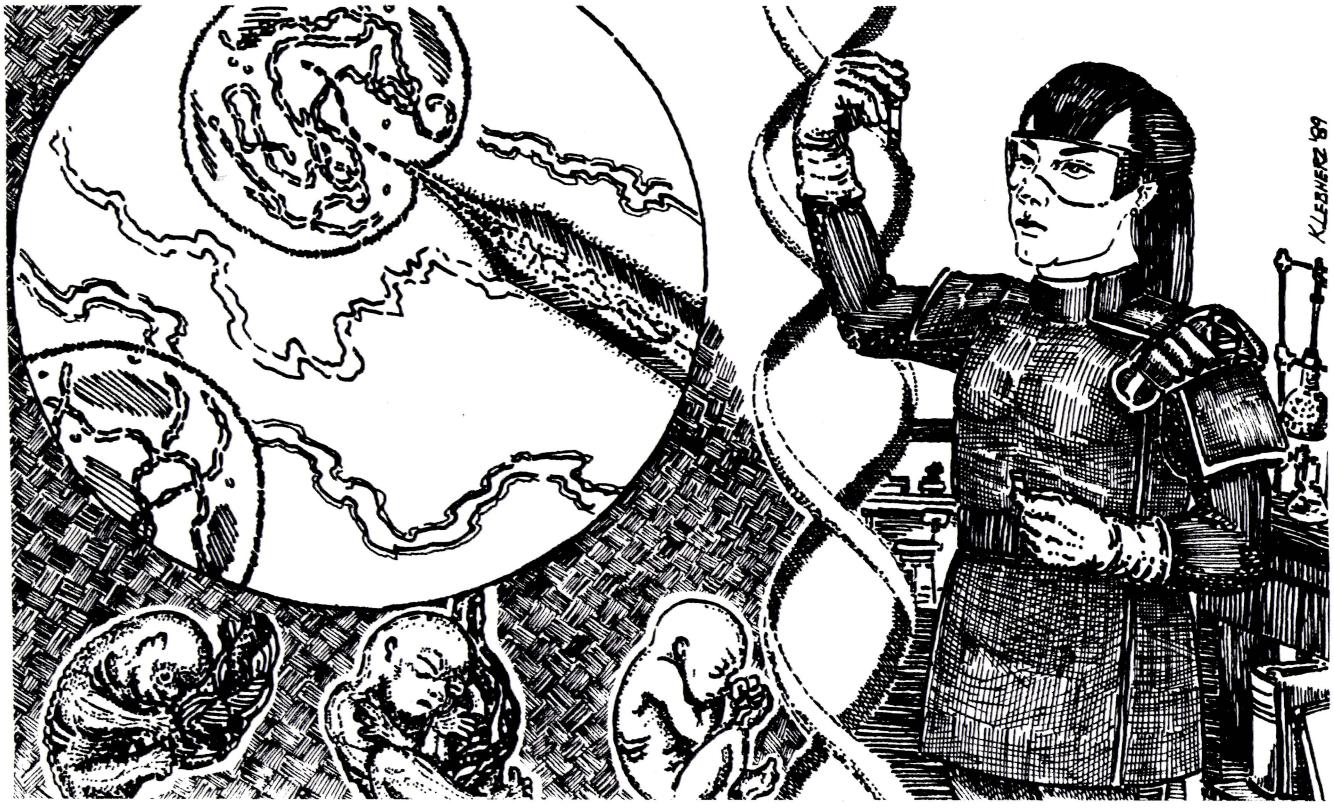
World Map Grid (Large)

Lakes and Seas	Broadleaf Forest
Swamp	Needleleaf Forest
Desert	Cities
Mountains	Other Terrain

Pilgra/Arar

A Referee's Guide To Research

—by James Holden



Adventure gaming has developed beyond the point where combat is the focus of each and every adventure. A significant advance in game design, the basic research procedure in the **MegaTraveller** *Referee's Companion*, allows scientific and technical activities to be incorporated into the game at a level of detail and realism previously experienced only with combat.

FUNDAMENTALS

The research procedure is a useful tool for refereeing several different kinds of activities, each similar to the others but different enough to merit separate treatment. For convenience, these activities can be divided into three categories: informative research, experimental research, and applied research.

Informative research is the acquisition of knowledge from living experts, books, electronic databases, or other sources of written or verbal testimony. An example of informative research would be the sifting of truth about a significant historical event from the reports of hundreds of eyewitnesses. Taks for informative research are often computer or interpersonal tasks.

Experimental researchers commonly investigate topics that have never been investigated before. Researchers in this situation must gather their own information by performing experiments. Chemists, physicists, and other researchers of the "hard" sciences often work in this manner. The tasks involve physical and mental skills used in setting up and evaluating the experiments.

Applied research is a label for activities such as computer programming and technological invention. These activities are involved processes requiring a considerable amount of time and a trial-and-error approach. Newly written computer programs generally contain errors and must be debugged; new inventions rarely perform as expected and require a good deal of tinkering and modification. Many other trial-and-error tasks can be put in this category.

PROBLEMS

Two common problems have prevented research from becoming a staple of gaming action.

The most important is the fact that research is boring. Role-playing is supposed to provide an escape from the mundane, and — let's face it — perusing old, dusty manuscripts or sitting in front of a computer for hours can be just a little too close to the jobs we perform in real life. Most of us would prefer something more exciting, something with danger, travel, and intrigue. Yet research can possess all of these elements if it's properly handled.

As a referee, don't limit yourself to pure research, research where the scientist is stuck in his lab for weeks running test after test on unremarkable chemical compounds. Instead, put into practice the advice on page 48 of the *Referee's Companion*: "The process of research can be an interesting way of leading adventurers into new situations and scenarios." If your players want travel, research can give them a reason to visit fascinating locations that might otherwise escape their notice. Danger, too, can play its part. Many times, physicists will want detailed information on hazardous phenomena like

black holes, information that can be obtained only from an entirely unsafe distance; chemists may find themselves working with potentially explosive or toxic chemicals; NPCs may oppose research efforts subtly or violently; and so on. Research can also be a source of intrigue, as corporate or governmental agents seek to steal the inventions or scientific data of their rivals.

Referring once again to the *Referee's Companion*, consider the example of Dr. Ishuggi, struggling to identify the means of transmission of a virulent plague. The deaths of innocent people add interest and meaning to Dr. Ishuggi's task, but the introduction of a time limit can make an even more dramatic difference. What if Dr. Ishuggi's work in the field has exposed him to the plague? Suddenly, a player finds himself in a race against time to save, not only thousands of faceless NPCs, but his own character as well. This tactic, if not overused, goes a long way in promoting player interest.

The other difficulty with research in a gaming situation is that both players and referees are often unsure exactly what's going on. This is especially true with experimental research. Characters will usually engage in informative or applied research for their own ends; consequently, they'll have a good idea of their goals, even if they're a little blank on how they plan to achieve them. Patrons, though, may hire characters to perform experimental research. A seemingly excellent plotline hinging on that premise begins to suffer when players start asking, "What kind of research?" or "What exactly do we have to do?" An unprepared referee can easily find himself short on answers.

This vagueness can be eliminated or reduced by several methods. The primary means of doing so is by advance preparation of detailed hypotheses and research tasks. This tactic is covered more fully under the next two subheadings.

Obviously, though, situations will arise in which the referee will not have the benefit of advance preparation. In this case, as referee, strive to keep unexpected research attempts simple in nature; if the players come up with an unexpected research topic, set a low hypothesis difficulty (so a great number of research tasks won't be required), improvise other basic details as needed, and move ahead with play. On the other hand, if the topic is of great importance to the scenario, or if it seems too complex for light treatment, let the characters embark on the project with the understanding that they won't be able to finish during this play session. This will give you time to create some details. Perhaps needed equipment, funds, or resources are lacking; this may also serve to delay prospective research attempts until adequate preparations can be made.

HYPOTHESES

Determining a "difficulty rating" for a given target hypothesis may present a problem for referees inexperienced with the research procedure. The difficulty of reaching a target hypothesis depends upon different criteria for each of the three types of research.

In the case of informative hypotheses, how correct was the initial hypothesis? If most of the facts were wrong at the outset, it will take time to remove the errors from the theory. Also, consider how hard it will be to find accurate information. If many sources contradict each other, if some living sources refuse to be interviewed, or if some have reason to conceal the truth, a lot of effort will have to be expended to sort truth from fiction.

Just as with informative hypotheses, how correct was the experimental hypothesis at the beginning? Did the initial hypothesis account for everything, or will later experiments reveal a host of outside factors that hadn't been considered? Will experiments prove the theory right or wrong immediately, or are the measurements involved so minute that the results can't be believed without repeated trials? Is the lab equipment adequate for the job?

For applied hypotheses, how sound was the original design? Was steel used when flexibility was needed, plastic employed despite a need for strength? Was the original design for the computer program complete, or were several important routines left out? Is the invention a masterpiece of interrelated subsystems or just a single component with a control board? Is the computer program a full-blown expert system or a collection of simple housekeeping functions? Is the inventor's or programmer's technical knowledge sufficient?

Guidelines like these can help referees to rate target hypotheses, but they can't provide definitive rules; too much depends on the subject at hand. Referees must still rely on common sense. Remember that the rating of a target hypothesis represents not the complexity of the final hypothesis but how many logical steps must be taken, how many major changes must be made from the initial theory. Using a map as a rough analogy, it's not the size of your destination, it's the distance between here and there.

Once the target hypothesis is set, what then? Go back and define each of the major revisions. In other words, if your inital hypothesis is numbered 1.0 and your target is 5.0, decide what intermediate steps 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 are. This will add detail during play, increasing the players' interest by allowing them to see clearly what progress they're making.

Defining all the minor revisions — 1.1, 1.2, and so on — can be tough unless your target hypothesis is only a minor revision of the original, as in Dr. Ishuggi's case in the *Referee's Companion*. Let the amount of work you put into defining hypothetical revisions reflect your players' interest. If they don't care for science as a whole, they're not likely to be impressed by a fifty-step research plan.

TASKS

Tasks make or break researchers. The theory may seem easy to prove, the design may look great on paper, but the tasks determine success or failure. As referee, it's your job to make them colorful.

If your players are trying to analyze an unknown chemical, don't make every research task a generic chemical experiment with the same difficulty, same time increment, and same modifiers. Change things around. Maybe one task will be easier but hazardous, another harder but less time-consuming. With experimental and applied research — and even informative research for the creative referee — great potential exists for interesting mishaps. Add some unexpected prerequisites, necessary materials or equipment. Throw in an occasional interpersonal task where the scientist must bargain for data, hardware components, or the like. Again, make it interesting.

Try to define some key research tasks just as you did for revisions of the hypothesis. Be descriptive with task definitions. Don't say: "To perform a chemical experiment." Say: "To analyze a chemical's molecular structure" or, even better, "To determine the likelihood of explosive instability," a hazardous task if you hadn't guessed.

Don't make your tasks too difficult, because the characters won't make any progress if they can't succeed at more than one task in five. Consider the fact that distant target hypotheses, not difficult tasks, will maintain game balance. If your players decide they want to reinvent the Darrian star trigger, don't make all their research tasks Impossible, just make the target hypothesis 12.0. That won't make building the doomsday device easy, but it will let them make some progress.

As a final piece of advice, page through popular science books and magazines for ideas, but don't worry if you end up with psuedoscientific nonsense; scientific notions will have changed a lot by the time of the Third Imperium. As long as your players enjoy themselves, your descriptions and these suggestions will have served their purpose.

An Example:

Here's an outline for a research-oriented adventure. Referees should feel free to change any details to suit the adventure to their campaigns.

patron: Any person or group concerned with environmental protection
required skills: Biology
required equipment: Basic lab equipment

PLAYERS' INFORMATION

Poor soil forces the inhabitants of Gessert/Pretoria (C254315-A) to rely on hydroponic farming to meet their food needs. Plants are rooted in loose gravel, through which a nutrient solution is pumped continually. The Kendon Agricultural Zone is the newest region opened for hydroponic development; farmlands surround the Kendon marsh, which occupies the Zone's center.

Local environmentalists have recently noted drastic decreases in the population levels of marsh wildlife. Several parties might be interested in finding the cause of the population decline. The characters may find employment with these parties, or might investigate on their own and sell their results to the highest bidder.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Several possible causes exist for the wildlife deaths in Kendon Marsh. Three likely situations and their adventuring potentials are listed below.

1a The hydroponic farms are small, private holdings. The farmers have failed to repair leaks in their nutrient pumping system. Significant amounts of the nutrient solution have drained into the marsh, increasing the growth of resident algae. As the algae died and decayed, decomposition reactions consumed large amounts of the oxygen in the marshwater, killing many plants and animals that lived in the marsh. The farmers may be opposed to outsiders on their lands and may try to hinder the characters' research. If the results of the study are made public, the farmers may prove especially hostile.

TASKS:

To collect samples of marsh water in various locations, near and far from given farms:

Routine, Biology or Survey, Dex, 1 hour

Referee: Impose animal encounters and hazardous events for color during this task.

To analyze the samples collected:

Routine, Chemistry or Biology, Edu, 10 min (uncertain)

Referee: Ask what the characters will look for and give the players results only for those particular tests, as follows: dissolved chemicals test yields nutrient densities, decomposition products, iron, calcium carbonate, etc.; dissolved gases tests yields levels of O2, CO2, methane, natural gas, helium; microscopic life test yields counts of algae, bacteria, amoebae, insect larvae. For Total Truth give the relevant results (first two or three in each list); for Some Truth give all figures; for No Truth give only the irrelevant later items in each list. Give these as percentages higher or lower than a comparison sample from an untouched pond elsewhere; don't try to make up numbers. If characters select an off-the-wall test, give them an off-the-wall result or an inconclusive one as a red herring.

To arrive at a hypothesis explaining the varying results:

Difficult, Biology, Edu, 15 min, (uncertain)

Referee: On a result of Total Truth, explain the nutrient densities, algae count, and oxygen content as described above (the samples farthest from the farms show the least damage). On Some Truth, note the high algae count and decomposition products nearest the farms only. On No Truth, no differences can be found between samples taken near and far from the farms.

To get permission to examine a farm's facilities:

Difficult, Admin or Carousing, AVG(Soc, Int), 3 min (hazardous)

Referee: Roleplay this interpersonal task. Depending on the approach the characters take and whether they explain what they are looking for, the farmer may be very friendly or may chase them off his land with a shotgun.

To find the source of nutrient pollution:

Routine, Mechanical, Dex, 5 min

To convince farmers or local government to take action to fix the situation:

Difficult, Persuasion or Admin, Soc, 1 hour, (uncertain)

Referee: On Some Truth, the changes made will be cosmetic and soon revert to the old conditions. On No Truth, characters get kicked out or sued.

1b The hydroponic farms in the Zone are owned by a large corporation. Poor maintenance has resulted in a situation like that presented above. If the environmental damage is proven to be the company's fault, legal action and stiff penalities may be brought against the corporation. If the corporate officials realize their own blame in the matter, they may try to silence the characters before they can publicize their findings.

TASKS:

As above for research tasks, but interpersonal tasks require Admin, Interview, or Legal skills and are reduced one level in difficulty if the characters have the backing of a government authority. If characters are on their own, tasks increase one level in difficulty and become hazardous.

2 Farming in the Zone has only begun in the past few years. Farm construction has damaged the Zone's original ecosystem and driven large carnivores into the marsh to find food. These animals have decimated the populations of

certain native species which have become their new prey. The characters' observations in the marsh may result in their being stalked by the carnivores. Also, corporate or private interests may complicate the situation. This scenario, however, is self-correcting, as the carnivore population will decline as the food supply declines.

TASKS:

To take a wildlife census (all species) in the marsh:
Routine, Biology, AVG (Int, End), 2 days (hazardous)
Referee: Any attempt to hurry this task increases the range of error in the figures from 10% to 30% either way. Impose animal encounters every hour, many of them dangerous. Survey equipment such as Scouts use will be necessary or the time increment triples.

To calculate an ideal ecological balance for the observed species:
Difficult, Computer, Int, 1 hour (uncertain)

To identify the carnivores as immigrants (based on above):
Difficult, Biology, Int, 20 min

To learn from local people that carnivore population has increased (alternative to above):
Routine, Interview or Carousing, Edu, 10 min

To predict the new balance:
Difficult, Biology, Computer, AVG (Int, Edu) 20 min (uncertain)

Referee: Both the possibility and the elapsed time to the new balance are in doubt. Total Truth is that things will work out in two local years, Some Truth distorts the time lapse, No Truth is that the marsh ecology will collapse.

3 Native plant life cannot tolerate certain trace minerals essential to plants used for human food. Nutrients are leaking as in scenario 1, but all plants are dying, with no excess algae bloom and minimal oxygen depletion. Again, farmers may not wish to be convinced that they need to mend their ways.

TASKS:

As in scenario 1 with results modified according to the paragraph above.

Characters should be allowed to form their own hypothesis and begin collecting data. Not all possible hypotheses are covered here. If they have selected the wrong one, the data they collect must be influenced to push them to a complete revision. If they think the problem is chemical, plenty of carnivore attacks during sample collection may convince them to look at that possibility, whereas if they think it's carnivores and not a one can be seen in the marsh, they will have to rethink the possibilities of chemical pollution.•

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	Didn't Read	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful
Editor's Digest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feature Adventure: Twice Confounded	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mega Adventure: Sword of Arthur	☐	☐	☐	☐
Beginner's Luck	☐	☐	☐	☐
Library Data: Reaver's Deep	☐	☐	☐	☐
System Survey: Pilgra	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ref's Guide to Research	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traveller Q&A	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tech Briefs: Sys. Rescue Fac. & Lifeboats	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gaming Digest: Aspects of Culture	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traveller Arsenal	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rebel Reporter: Restored Vilani Empire	☐	☐	☐	☐
2300AD: The Tula-Class Frigate	☐	☐	☐	☐

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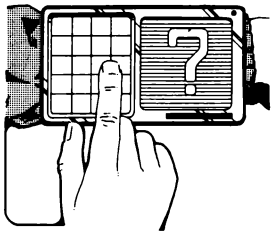

Traveller Q&A

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Several of you have written with questions about various items in the *Starship Operator's Manual.* So, in this issue, we focus strictly on questions and answers about the *Starship Operator's Manual.*

Question 1: Why does the jump drive as described in the *Starship Operator's Manual* use a "lanthanum hull grid", which is not consistent with original Traveller? Original Traveller stated the lanthanum was in the coils of the inner jump drive.

When we embarked on the **MegaTraveller** project with GDW, we agreed early on that if a change was truly needed to improve original **Traveller**, we would *change Traveller.*

In the last five years, Marc Miller has been espousing the "jump grid in the hull" concept. It was our (Digest Group's) idea to have the hull grid be the part of the drive system with lanthanum. Since we also wanted zuchai crystals in the inner jump drive, we wanted to clearly distinguish the lanthanum from the zuchai crystals. In a deliberate departure from prior **Traveller** works (which we felt was no big deal in this case), we put the grid — now containing lanthanum — into the hull.

We had difficulty explaining how something inside a starship could throw the whole vessel into another dimension, unless the hull was somehow included in the jump process. Marc Miller's hull grid seemed the perfect solution, as well as being fun and "neat".

Before you condemn the approach of picking the "neatest idea" as the best, let's consider some other popular science-fiction backgrounds.

If you want to get hard-nosed, Star Trek's transporter is totally impossible and stupid. But it's a lot of fun, and real nifty tech. The same goes for the "light saber" in Star Wars. A total nonsense weapon that couldn't exist — but you have to admit it's a delightfully clever weapon, elegant and dramatic. We feel the hull jump grid also fits into this category, so we went ahead and violated the precedent of earlier **Traveller** works in the interest of fixing some old conceptual problems and getting niftier tech in the process.

So to summarize: yes, the lanthanum jump grid is inconsistent with original Traveller — we knew it was and yet deliberately went ahead with the new concept. We feel it is a minor change, and a marked improvement. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Question 2: Isn't it impossible for computers ever to advance enough to deal with the hopelessly complex jump grid calculations in a matter of minutes? Even today's supercomputers can take days and days to compute hull stress effects in simulations.

In a recent article from *Computerworld* magazine, the possibility of quantum computers was discussed. The article describes how, at least in theory, it may be possible someday to build computers that are at least a trillion times faster than today's fastest computers. So how much faster is a trillion times?

Consider: let's assume that using today's best computers, we could resolve the jump grid computations in one billion years! Is that complex enough? Using a computer that is one trillion times faster would resolve the same problem in just over 8 hours! Throw in massive parallel processing, and it's easily conceivable the problem could be resolved in under 30 minutes. In fact, 30 minutes may be pessimistic.

Isn't it interesting how we tech level 8 Americans, in our "arrogance", assume we know the limits of what is possible because (after all) we are so technologically advanced. We need to stretch our "known limits", and stop thinking so small. Besides, for something to be high-tech science fiction (**Traveller** is in the *far future,* remember), it needs to be "far fetched".

Don't judge potential future technology too harshly against what we currently believe to be possible. Next week a discovery may be made to prove it wasn't such a crazy idea after all. History is full of "experts" who said something was technologically impossible, and were later made to look the fool.

In the early 1800's it was thought that if man travelled at speeds over 20 mph, his breath would be taken away, and he'd die. Silly, we say. But that was the accepted "expert opinion" of the day. As late as 1957 science books were saying the "ray guns" of science fiction were so much nonsense, and would never exist. The laser was invented in 1960. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Question 3: Isn't starship combat damage all wrong now that the jump grid is in the hull?

Given that a high tech computer can resolve infinitely complex jump grid computations in a few minutes, it seems reasonable that the same computer can correct for grid damage in ship combat within an hour. And reading between the lines a bit in *Starship Operator's Manual,* if 10% or more of the hull grid is destroyed in one location, the computer cannot totally compensate for the grid damage.

However, if over 10% of the hull grid is damaged, *a jump is still possible.* A serious hull hit does not, repeat, *does not* destroy the jump drive. If the ship is destroyed, (the hull breaks apart), only then is the hull grid guaranteed to fail — not before. The main effect of extensive hull damage is to increase the risk that the jump drive will not work *correctly.* Increased risk increases game tension, which makes the adventure more intense and exciting.

With a reasonable amount of skill, a ship with significant hull damage will still jump safely, especially if the crew is worth its salt. Most military vessels have a fairly good engineer (at least skill level 4, with average education of 7), which is enough of a DM to lower the risky jump task's difficulty to routine — the same difficulty as a normal engage task with a skill DM of 1. This is the same risk as a typical free trader jump (they usually aren't as skilled). Most military ships will jump out safely (even with severe hull damage) because their crew skill makes the difference.

The jump grid also helps explain how the jump drive can get hit and simply be reduced to a lower jump level. By losing grid connections (either internal or external), the jump computer is forced to compute a simpler hull energizing sequence and thereby leave out the damaged connections. This fits nicely with the *Starship Operator's Manual* reference to shorter jumps using simpler energizing sequences.

If we had stuck to the original coils concept, it makes sense that one well-placed hit could reduce the entire coil assembly to a slag heap. The hull grid approach does a better job of explaining the resilience of jump drive because you effectively have to blow away the guy's whole ship to get his jump drive — a tough proposition. I'll take the grid, thank you.

Okay, you ask, why aren't there "jump drive –1" hits on the surface explosion table? Because it's darn hard to do even jump drive minus 1 damage to the hull grid. So hard, in fact, that you've got to get a significant surface explosion which blows out a whole chunk of the hull (effectively a combined surface/interior explosion). And you haven't increased the jump risk yet — you've just forced him to a simpler jump grid sequence (he can still jump, just not as far). — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Question 4: Lanthanum is not plentiful enough on earth for us to invent something like a jump drive if we have to put an extensive lanthanum grid in the hull. Isn't basing an extensive hull grid on a rare earth element like lanthanum a big mistake? Where would we get enough lanthanum to lace an entire hull with it?

There are many nearby possibilities for lanthanum deposits other than just the earth. Don't forget the other eight planets, all the asteroids, and the many dozens of moons in our solar system. There could be literal lanthanum stones lying on the ground on Pluto for all we know.

There are two other things to keep in mind about the lanthanum grid traces in a starship hull:

• The grid traces need only to be doped with lanthanum. A kilogram of the stuff may be enough to do an entire 100-ton starship hull.

• Lanthanum is not the only element that will work. It just happens to be the best.

And for what it's worth, earth has nothing remotely resembling dilithium crystals either. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*•

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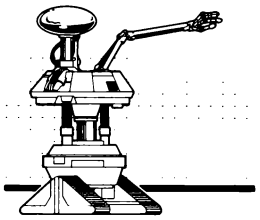


System Rescue Facilities and Lifeboats

TECH BRIEF

— by Harvey Fawcett

Space accidents will always happen, no matter what the tech level. Most space accidents occur in normal space in a planetary system (little can be done for a damaged ship in jumpspace, anyway).

The Imperium encourages each member star system to maintain an effective in-system search and rescue capability. Most mainworlds do maintain a local search and rescue capability. Any world with a starport class of A, B, or C has some means of rescuing the crew of a stricken vessel. The bigger the starport — the larger the volume of traffic — and typically the more extensive the service provided.

STARPORT FACILITIES

Class	*Provided Services*
A	Search and rescue capability to 100 AUs. Facilities include gas giant and satellite search. Can handle major space accidents involving large numbers of passengers.
B	Search and rescue capability to 50 AUs. Facilities include gas giant search capability. Can handle space accidents involving a moderate number of passengers.
C	Search and rescue capability to 10 AUs. Can handle space accidents involving small vessels and small numbers of passengers.
D	Monitoring of major shipping lanes only out to 1 AU. Not able to handle space accidents and search attempts without help.
E	Rudimentary monitoring of orbit of system via recording beacons. Little, if any, search and rescue capability.

ORGANIZATION

By way of example, here is the rescue system of Mora in the Spinward Marches — a large, high-tech world with a class A starport.

Mora organizes its system rescue facilities from control stations in its orbital starports. Each station monitors:

- Emergency channels.
- System traffic, using long-range sensor arrays.

Each station also maintains a large cache of rescue equipment. Mora's orbital rescue stations maintain the system's space rescue facilities.

Also placed around the system at strategic points such as jump points, shipping lanes, and refueling sources are a number of smaller, automated monitoring stations. These stations report any potential rescue situations to the main rescue monitoring stations orbiting Mora.

RESCUE VESSELS

Most member systems use a number of standard vessel designs.

For instance, modified 100-ton shuttles fly at 6 gees, incorporate extensive sensors and comm equipment, include a small sickbay with emergency low berths, and carry emergency gear (life bubbles, cutting gear, lighting equipment, and a docking tube to help remove passengers from a stricken vessel). The crew consists of pilot, copilot/navigator, one or more doctors, and several engineer/rescue specialists. These vessels typically stay on standby or on patrol, though they can only last about a week without refueling.

Often, larger rescue tenders will be stationed on a world's surface or at the main control center. They have much the same facilities as the smaller shuttles, but are equipped to handle larger disasters.

The control base of the more heavily travelled systems may have rescue tenders up to 2,500 tons displacement. These very large tenders can handle all but the largest multi-ship disasters alone. In times of emergency a system defense boat might also come under the jurisdiction of the rescue service.

FUNDING

Rescue facilities are normally considered part of the operating costs of the starport. Accordingly, the berthing fees for every vessel using the starport include fees that go to the local rescue service. In addition, the owner of any vessel requiring rescue is generally billed for the specific costs of the rescue effort. If negligence was the cause of the accident, the rescue costs may include fines levied by the local system authorities.

THE SK-3 LIFEBOAT

Many spacegoing vessels (and most commercial passenger craft) have lifeboats or escape capsules of some kind. The following is one such craft.

Craft ID:	SK-3 Lifeboat, Type L, TL15, MCr12.01
Hull:	18/45, Disp=20, Config=1SL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=120 tons, Loaded=180 tons
Power:	1/2 Fusion=150Mw, Duration=45/135, 1/2 backup batteries and solar cells
Loco:	1/2, Maneuver=1, Cruise=750kph, Top=1,000kph, Agility=6
Commo:	Radio=systemx3
Sensors:	Radar=allweather contx1, environ sensorx1, rad sensorx1, synthetic visionx2, ActObjScan=Diff, ActObjPin=Diff, PassObjScan=Rout
Control:	Computer=2x3, Panel=holodynamic linkx52, Environ=basic env, basic ls, extended ls, grav plates
Other:	Seats=Roomyx5, emergency low berthx4, Fuel=90kl, Cargo=40kl, EMLevel=faint, ObjSize=small

SK-3 LIFEBOAT OPERATION

Opening the lifeboat's outer hatch starts up an automatic powerup sequence and the dump of navigation data and local system information from the ship's computer.

Sealing the inner hatch allows the lifeboat to be manually launched. Under certain circumstances, a loaded lifeboat will automatically launch: loss of the parent ship's pressure integrity; power plant/maneuver drive/computer failure; or five minutes after the inner hatch is sealed. The manual

launch switch is clearly marked and covered, to prevent accidental launches.

When the SK-3 lifeboat launches, the parent ship's lifeboat access air lock is sealed, and explosive retaining bolts release the lifeboat from the parent ship. Chemical rockets ignite in the lifeboat and propel it clear of the wreckage.

The lifeboat coasts clear of the ship, during which time the computer starts transmitting the three Imperial emergency codes — SOS, mayday, and signal GK — on all distress frequencies. It also transmits a constant tone to allow rescue ships to home in.

The SK-3 lifeboat computer has several options at this stage. In a heavily populated system it can point the lifeboat toward the nearest shipping lane in the direction of the mainworld. Rescue should come within a day or two if the system has any amount of constant traffic.

If possible, the computer will fly the lifeboat to the nearest space facility or habitable world and go into a high orbit. If the lifeboat is not contacted within another standard day, it will attempt a landing.

During the orbit phase, the computer evaluates the planet's surface and decides on a landing site. Factors which are considered include:

- flat, firm terrain for easy landing and communications
- availability of water
- probable availability of food plants and animals
- climate stability
- amount of shelter

When the SK-3 lifeboat approaches a planet with an atmosphere, it deploys a chute and floats to a soft landing. If the planet is a waterworld, pontoons or a similar device will inflate to keep the lifeboat from sinking.

Upon touchdown, high visibility devices are employed to clearly mark the distressed vehicle's presence. Such devices include colored balloons, flares, dyes, and radio beacons. The SK-3 also incorporates a radar reflector to increase the lifeboat's EM signature.

The SK-3 has enough stores to make long-term survival possible. The occupants should use the power plant as little as possible to save fuel. The SK-3 lifeboat includes solar cells to charge batteries.

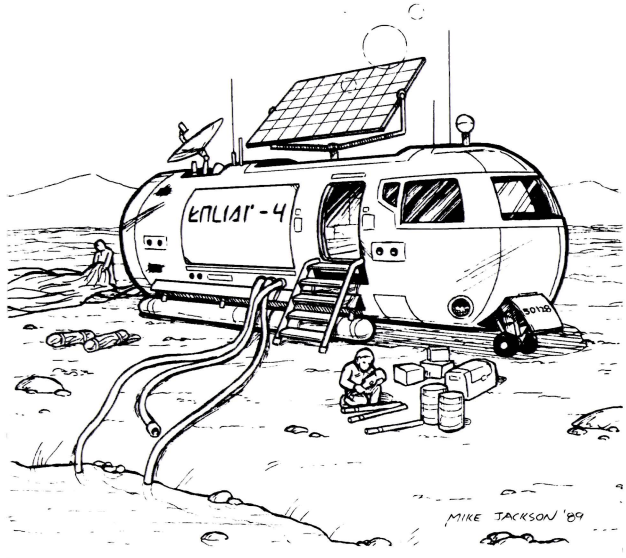
The computer holds survival information. A hardcopy is available in case of lifeboat computer failure. The lifeboat includes some form of water collector with filters.

The craft's facilities include heating, lighting, a fresher, cooker, and food sterilization and preservation unit. Minimum use should be made of these to conserve energy.

The battery/cell combination used by the SK-3 lifeboat keeps the craft operational indefinitely. The best survival option is for the occupants to hunt and scavenge food and stay near the lifeboat.

Here is a sample survival kit found on most SK-3 lifeboats:

360 man-days of concentrated rations
10x long term survival kits
2x multitask nav-aid
4x continental range radios
1x microwave fence system
1x radiation detector
2x hand computers
4x combat medic field kits
1x computer med scanner
10x cold weather sleeping bags
4x strobe beacons



4x IR beacons
10x flashlights
10x tubes snow/water dye
30x parachute flares
30x smoke flares
4x tents
1x comprehensive tool kit
300m rope
2x mountaineering kits
2x grav packs
10x vacc suits TL14 Type C
2x snub pistols + 400 rnds ammo
4x shotguns + 1,000 rnds ammo
4x 7mm ACRs + 1,000 rnds ammo

If the parent ship was involved in hostile action, the lifeboat will launch, will not transmit any distress signal, and a landing will be preferred. The boat will use its drive on pulse power to reduce emissions. Decoys that emulate the lifeboat in EM signature and flightplan will also be fired.

Upon landing no transmissions will be made and no markers will be deployed. Alternatively, an option can be manually selected which will allow the lifeboat to coast along among the wreckage of its parent ship or orbit the nearest gas giant. In this case, the boat reduces to minimum power and the survivors should enter the low berths. Mean time to failure in this mode is 100 years.

With the rebellion and ensuing fighting this type of craft will be in almost constant use throughout the Imperium.•

Aspects of Culture

THE GAMING DIGEST
—by Nancy Parker

It's the little things that catch us. Consider the plight of the efficiency expert sent to a less developed region to increase factory production. He instituted a piecework pay scale and production soared. The workers produced as much in three days as they used to do in four. And on the fourth day, no one came to work. They had made "enough" money, and they valued leisure time above cash: a detail that no one had told the expert.

Or consider the gentle Giiru, whose products and companies are often named for natural phenomena, such as flowers, mountains, or weather events. When they began to market their wares on a nearby world where aggressive imagery was preferred, they unfortunately translated the names. The Pansy line of men's wear did not sell well, for some reason.

Now imagine your intrepid adventurers setting their Free Trader down at a new starport. The world is listed as Lo NAg NIn and they have chosen their cargo accordingly. What *don't* they know about the world? Is part of their cargo illegal on this planet? Will they be challenged to duels for minor social blunders? Or will every official expect a bribe just to do his assigned job?

Many factors make up the profile of a society. Some of the more important ones are discussed below, with hints as to their effects on play. The tables may be used to roll up a "society profile" or as hints for tailoring a world for your campaign. Although a society will have some attitude on each of these points, many of them will not differ significantly from the home worlds of the adventurers. But even one point, if misunderstood, can add wild complications to a game session. Have fun!

Individuality vs. Collective Action (2D)

2	No idea of group action
3,4	Voluntary groups
5-7	Voluntary joining of groups that must take orders for duration of membership
8,9	Some compulsory collective action
10,11	Major areas of life collectivized
12	All action collectivized; individuality does not exist.

At the extremes are the "collective mind" which must make all decisions in dealing with adventurers, and the total individualists who cannot even name a leader or representative to speak for them. Areas that may be affected are work, military, social-recreational, charity, spiritual-philosophical, and family life.

Social Mobility (2D)

2	Hereditary social class strictly enforced
3,4	Limited interaction and movement between classes; jobs dictated within classes.
5,6	Somewhat rigid class, changes by marriage, income, profession
7,8	Class flexible, depends on talent, charisma, achievements
9,10	Minimal distinctions of social class
11,12	Aggressive egalitarianism, all distinctions denied

Characters are most apt to trip in treating either very high-class or very low-class people as equals. This may insult the upper class or result in the characters being classed with the untouchables they associated with. It might be a mistake to treat people with deference or to claim privilege in an aggressively egalitarian society.

Physical Mobility (1D, +1 if Industrial, +3 if Early Stellar+)

1	Law or custom ties a person to specific location lifelong; other parts of the world unknown
2	Persons rarely move beyond a single week's travel from their birthplace; news may take years or decades to spread
3	Merchants and adventurers bring cultures in contact, pioneers move often; communications limited to travel speed
4	Common people move easily within their home continent; rapid communications
5	Global travel common for business and pleasure; "global village" communications
6	Much of population "rootless"

How much do different areas of the world intermix and communicate? How freely may the PCs travel? Sedentary populations are apt to be provincial in outlook and unaware of global problems, while highly mobile people may disappear before characters are finished dealing with them.

Supernatural vs. Rational Worldview (2D)

2	Totally supernatural worldview
3,4	Reasoned supernaturalism, some observational evidence
5-7	Mixed attitudes, by nation, class, or education
8,9	Primarily rational worldview; some holdovers of superstition
10,11	Totally rational worldview
12	Sense-oriented rationalism ("If I can't see it, it isn't there.")

Adventurers often fall afoul of odd religions and their taboos ("You have a cargo of *what*?"), but might be equally puzzled by people who believed completely in fate (and so would take no action to avert disaster) or who consulted astrologers or oracles about every detail of life and business ("I'll buy your cargo if the lots say 'yes'.") A totally sense-oriented rationalism is equally frustrating ("But anyone can *see* the stars are only points of light. Where are you *really* from?")

Formality vs. Emotionalism (1D)

1	No public display of any feelings
2	Emotional display varies by social class
3	Restrictions differ for sexes
4	Formalized displays of specific emotions
5	Free expression except in front of strangers
6	Total emotional openness

This is most apt to be "color", where a blunder will cause the characters to be ridiculed but have no serious results. However, this can also be an index of how violently locals will react when offended. Formal cultures rely on law, custom, and in extreme cases, on formal challenges to handle problems. Emotional cultures are apt to settle things on the spot, verbally or physically.

Gender Discrimination (2D)

2	Strict segregation except for reproduction; different work, living quarters, etc.
3	Limited contacts between sexes
4-6	Contact routinely; one sex dominates totally; roles in society still distinct
7,8	One sex leads, other is dependent; some mixing of societal roles
9,10	Legal equality of sexes
11,12	Cultural equality of sexes

Adventurers may be shunned or ridiculed if they take on tasks "proper" for the other sex. They may be challenged by jealous protectors simply for speaking to the opposite sex in public. At the other end of the scale, a character may find customs, clothing, and even public restrooms unisex, and locals will be insulted if the character even wants to know which sex he's dealing with.
Note: Aliens with more than two genders may have any pattern or combination of relationships among them.

Distribution of Wealth (1D each)
Acquired

1	By force
2	Inherited
3,4	By trade
5,6	By law (welfare or socialist)

Distributed

1	Few rich, many poor
2	Few rich, few middle, many poor
3,4	Few rich, many middle, few poor
5	Most equal, some poor
6	Equal incomes

There's nothing like an unexpected tax to upset a trader's plans, and the more socialized an economy, the more hidden taxes it has. On the other hand, if all wealth on a world is acquired by force, adventurers had better watch their backs. The type of cargo appropriate to a world is also influenced by the distribution of wealth. If a few rich people are the main market, luxury goods will be in demand, whereas a large middle class market will want a range of somewhat more prosaic items with a few luxuries.

Privacy (2D)

2	No concept of privacy in the language
3	Privacy forbidden
4	Actions commonly scrutinized or publicized
5	Actions open to scrutiny at will by some agency
6,7	Court order necessary for inspections, eavesdropping, searches; public figures subject to more invasion of privacy than private citizens
8	All citizens protected in communications and dwellings
9	Finances private
10	Strong privacy customs; no personal questions
11	Physical isolation available at will
12	Physical isolation imposed at all times

It is often important that characters know whether they will be spied upon and what measures they can take to have private conferences. In a strong privacy-oriented culture, the greatest chance for error is in offending locals by prying questions.

Body Zones and Modesty Taboo
Determine social distance as 1D-2 meters. A result of 0 means 0.5m, -1 means almost touching. This is the distance at which business contacts will try to converse with a character.
Modesty (2D)

2	Total coverup mandatory at all times
3,4	Face, small amounts of skin may be seen
5,6	Moderate coverage mandatory
7-9	Certain body part (e.g., head, feet) must be covered or uncovered in token of respect
10,11	Minimal attire required
12	No taboos

Body zones can be a source of discomfort when a local closes in to what he considers social distance, or remains apparently aloof. In a culture disposed to violence, crowding someone could cause a fight. Modesty taboos are more likely to cause trouble if violated.

Value of Life
Human Life (3D)

3	Anything goes
4	Killing equal or lower classes is OK, slavery allowed
5	Ritual killing allowed
6,7	Certain people are fair game (infants, elderly, ethnic groups, those with variant beliefs)
8	Crimes of passion condoned
9-11	Self-defense OK
13-15	War and execution OK, all else no
16,17	Death penalty outlawed
18	No killing; war abhorred

Other Life (2D)

2	Everything is human property; cruelty common, may extend to alien sophonts
3,4	All is for human use, but should be humanely treated
5-8	Conservation ethic, some animal life protected
9,10	All animal life protected
11	Plant life respected, conserved
12	Only dead plant life may be harvested

The character who deviates from the local norm in the direction of less value is in legal trouble. The one who is more particular than the locals may get himself killed while expecting the law to protect him.

Child-Rearing Responsibility (2D)

2	Father only
3	Mother only
4	Other relative
5,6	Nuclear family
7,8	Extended family
9	Hired caretakers
10	Group responsibility (tribe or commune)
11	State responsibility
12	No one responsible — children run wild

These affect primarily adventurers who deal with NPC children (see Issue 15's Gaming Digest).

Honesty (2D)

2,3	Strict ethical code, no one questions
4-6	Widely accepted ethical code, offenders despised
7-9	Lip service to ethics, offenders common
10	Cheating normal, bribes expected but some law occasionally enforced
11	Little or no formal code of ethics
12	Reverse ethics, violence and deceit admired

The trustworthiness of NPCs is a prime issue here, with trouble from people wanting bribes (or refusing them indignantly) in second place.

Work Ethic, Acquisitiveness (1D)

1	People will take any means to get out of work while still getting what they want
2	Work is only for earning a living, extra money is not desired
3	Work is the way to get what you want, people seek to live better
4	Conspicuous consumption is the goal of earning money
5	Work is an end in itself, a source of pleasure
6	Work is the meaning of life; leisure is unknown or sinful

The poor efficiency expert at the beginning of this article is a fine example of what can happen when a culture's work ethic is misunderstood.

Attitudes toward Time (2D)

2	No schedules; expect something when you see it
3,4	Schedules are flexible
5,6	Some things have firm schedules, others are relaxed
7-9	Most areas of life are scheduled, minimal delay tolerated
10,11	Promptness expected in everything
12	Fanatic punctuality

Will an NPC meet an appointment, or leave characters waiting for hours without apology or explanation? How promptly will work be done by local help? Characters may offend an NPC by being late or missing a work deadline.•

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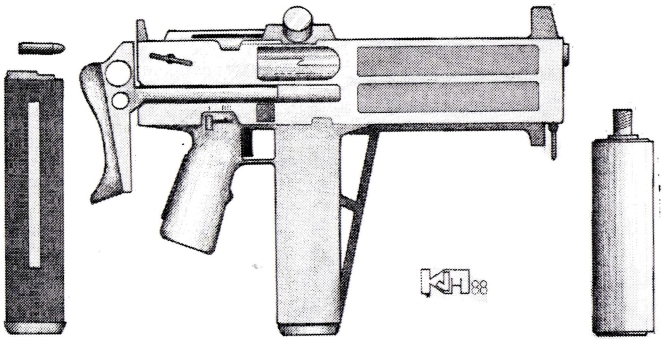
SUBMACHINEGUN (SMG)



Tech Level 10 version illustrated

NOTES:

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
○	5	Submachinegun-5	2.5 kl	2.5 kg	Cr500
○	7	Submachinegun-7	2.0 kl	2.0 kg	Cr650
○	10	Submachinegun-10	1.7 kl	1.7 kg	Cr750

AMMO STATISTICS

	TL	Mag Size	Round	Sig	Recoil	Danger Space	Weight	Price
○	5	30 rds	bullet	med	med/R	1.5m	0.5 kg	Cr20
○	7	30 rds	bullet	med	med/R	1.5m	0.4 kg	Cr20
		30 rds	AP	med	med/R	1.5m	0.5 kg	Cr50
○	10	30 rds	bullet	med	med/R	1.5m	0.3 kg	Cr20
		30 rds	AP	med	med/R	1.5m	0.4 kg	Cr45

med sig=some light/noise generated; easy to spot if fired in darkness;
med recoil=causes disorientation if fired in a zero-g environment;
/R indicates rapid fire possible.

AMMO USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents one round

○ TL5: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

○ TL7: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

○ TL10: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

DESCRIPTION

A popular weapon for close and medium range fire, the submachinegun (versions include weapons chambered for 8mm, 8.5mm, 9mm, and 10mm pistol ammunition) fire slugs or AP rounds. Shown here is the Stellarms M19E, a model widely marketed on worlds where the low tech level, poor economy, or tactical preference makes the SMG a weapon of choice.

Like most such arms, the M19E may be fitted with a silencer or dot targeting sight. Standard features on the M19E include a collapsing stock and a lightweight reinforced polymer casing with an integral magazine well.

A 30-round magazine is standard, but a special 60-round drum magazine and adaptor is available.

TASK LIBRARY

Round	Max Range	C*	S*	M*	L*	Hit Dmg
bullets	Long (100m)	S/3	R/3	D/1	F/0	3
AP	Long (100m)	S/5	R/5	D/2	F/1	2

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

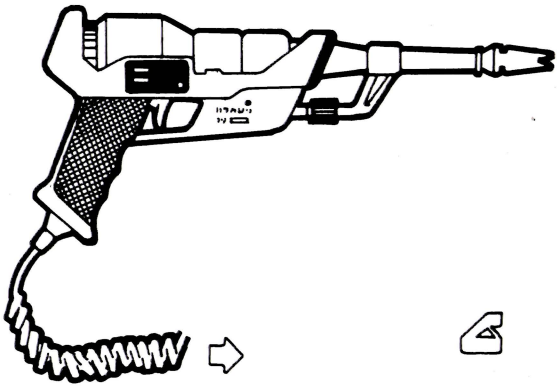
To repair a damaged SMG:
[varies], Mechanical, Dex, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the shotgun: use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage ..... 2 min
minor damage ..... 10 min
major damage ..... 3 hrs
destroyed..... 6 hrs

For field repair, double the time increment, in addition to other standard increases.

LASER PISTOL



Tech Level 9 version illustrated

NOTES:

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
○ 9	Laser Pistol+Scope-9	0.7 kl	0.7 kg	Cr2,000
○ 13	Laser Pistol+Scope-13	2.2 kl	2.2 kg	Cr3,000
○ 15	Laser Pistol+Scope-15	2.5 kl	2.5 kg	Cr7,500

AMMO STATISTICS

TL	Mag Size	Round	Sig	Recoil	Danger Space	Weight	Price
○ 9	50 shots	bckpack	med	low	—	2.0 kg	Cr1,500
○ 13	200 shots	bckpack	low	low	—	2.5 kg	Cr8,000
○ 15	15 shots	integral	low	low	—	—	—

med sig=some light/noise generated; easy to spot if fired in darkness; low sig=hard to spot; very little light or noise when fired; low recoil=can fire in a zero-g environment without causing disorientation.

AMMO USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents three rounds

○ TL9:

○ TL13:

○ TL15:

DESCRIPTION

A laser weapon's complete lack of recoil has always made it an ideal weapon for zero-g combat situations. Among laser weapons, the laser pistol is especially liked because of its shorter barrel length as compared to a laser carbine or laser rifle. A shorter barrel provides one with greater maneuverability within the confines of a starship.

At tech levels 9 and 13, the laser pistol is powered by an accompanying power back-pack. In the weapon illustrated, the power pack feeds current through a beltstrap, to an outlet port just above the holster. From here, a cord joins the power feed to the pistol.

By design, the laser pistol has a built-in target designator. A half-pull on the trigger sends a low-power beam to use for targeting (treat as a built-in scope). When using the target designation feature, the signature of the tech level 13 and 15 models becomes medium instead of low.

Pulling the trigger all the way produces a full-power beam.

TASK LIBRARY

Wpn	Max Range	C*	S*	M*	L*	VL*	D*	Hit Dmg
TL9	VLng (900m)	S/4	R/4	D/4	D/2	D/2	I/1	3
TL13/15	Dist (1,000m)	S/6	R/6	D/6	D/3	D/3	I/1	3

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

To repair a damaged laser pistol:
[varies], Mechanical, Dex, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the pistol: use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage ..... 2 min
minor damage ..... 10 min
major damage ..... 1 hr
destroyed..... 2 hrs

For field repair, double the time increment, in addition to other standard increases.

The Restored Vilani Empire

THE REBEL REPORTER
—by Clayton R. Bush

In this issue, we reprint a Naasirka promotional tract circulated widely in the Vland Domain. While few racially pure Vilani exist today, the traditions of the old Vilani ways are still very much alive in the sectors surrounding Vland. Thus the term "Vilani" as used today is a cultural rather than a racial reference.

This tract defends the actions of Archduke Ishuggi Tauribi, the Shadow Emperor of the newly Restored Vilani Empire.

Ishuggi Tauribi, the Ishimkarun of the Ziru Sirka, is not rebelling against the Third Imperium. The Third Imperium failed before he acted. He is preserving part of civilization after the collapse of an interstellar government.

During the first 18 months following Strephon's assassination, Lucan and the traitorous Dulinor failed to resolve the succession, and the Imperium fragmented. Only the Daibei region seceded from the Third Imperium after Vland.

Even with Corridor and Lishun overrun, Lucan still ordered the Vland fleets to transfer to Zarushagar. He would sacrifice the people of the Vland region for his own dreams of revenge. With overwhelming popular support, Ishuggi forthrightly refused Lucan's demands. During the uncertain months that followed Ishuggi's refusal to Lucan, news arrived that the Domain of Antares had seceded from the Third Imperium.

...without a quick military resolution of the rebellion, the Imperium would fragment.

The Imperial Research Station on Gashema, one of Vland's moons, studies psychohistory using the vast records of Vland's Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin. In late 1117 it finally released a prediction of the situation at Strephon's death. (One difficulty with current psychohistory is the time needed for computations.) The study concluded that without a quick military resolution of the rebellion, the Imperium would fragment. At the same time, after considering the heavy losses on the Zarushagar and Dagudashag fronts and the Solomani incursions rimward, the Vland Naval Office predicted a stalemate.

Considering the two reports, Ishuggi convened the Grand Council of the Domain of Vland. (Due to fighting, Corridor, Gushemege, and Dagudashag Sectors were underrepresented.) The Ziru Sirka was re-formed, to shelter the people of Vland Domain, and permit the full exercise of their abilities, without involvement in the futile fighting continuing in the Imperial Core.

It is reported that the withdrawal of the Vilani-run megacorporations (namely Makhidkarun, Naasirka, and Sharurshid) from those regions far from Vland Domain has ruined trade in many of those areas. This was inevitable, regardless. The Vilani withdrew from an unresolvable situation. The Vilani megacorporations salvaged such assets as could be transported to Vland Domain, turning their back on the Third Imperium (or what was left of it).

It did not matter that the Vilani withdrew: predicting from historical precedent, it was obvious that the collapse of the Third Imperium would end long-distance trade. Consider history: in the last days of the Rule of Man, factionalism and fighting ruined trade. The building of warships was considered more important than replacing the losses of interstellar merchant vessels — losses either from fighting or from normal attrition.

In the current rebellion, the Vilani megacorporation exodus from far-away regions brought recession sooner, but preserved assets for a recovery when the rebellion ends.

Some areas even welcomed the withdrawal. Reports continue that former sector-level companies are now vying to replace the megacorportations on trade routes. Some nobility also approved of the withdrawal, because it freed shipping subsidies for other purposes.

Some critics look on the Vilani trade with the Vargr as abetting an enemy. But Vland is a long-settled sector, and must import scarce raw materials. Trade discourages war, and the reverse is also true: war discourages trade.

The Vargr are trading for Vilani goods. This encourages industry, although critics are right that some goods purchased from the Vargr were not manufactured by them, but were simply stolen instead. Still, fighting would exhaust the Vilani military, encourage Vargr glory-seekers, and not provide long-term security. So trade is the better option. After all, does a gunman attack the neighborhood grocer?

It is said that the bureaux are crushing small operators in favor of the megacorporations. Such bleeding hearts should look more closely at what they criticze. We Vilani know that a benevolent monopoly of basic services is the best form of economy. This truth arises from the historically proven efficiency of giving the specialized shugilii the rights to process all food.

The bureaux simply provide a new intermediate structure between the worlds and the Igsiirdi (the Vilani Council of 300). They have the authority of the old subsectors.

On Vilani worlds, it is normal for the nobility to appoint leading citizens to governing councils. These appointments are to be made without bias. Showing favoritism to one's old corporation or organization causes loss of face.

Also, a Vilani normally works for a megacorporation for most of his working life. At the end of his working career, a Vilani normally retires and sets up a small business of his own, or takes one over from his parents. So the Vilani economy has many small firms operating under the trade umbrella provided by the megacorporations — both before the bureaux, and now with the bureaux.

The megacorporations used their resources to establish the bureaux. In many cases, this meant that quality control departments and quasi-government operations (like starports, for instance) transferred to a new entity, the bureau. The Imperial nobility were not replaced; they simply selected new administrators, managers, and lesser nobles to form the councils that run the bureaux.

Carping detractors have called the Igsiirdi "a bunch of businessmen trying to run a government, headed by a man who lost three-fourths of his Domain." Nonsense. The Igsiirdi was appointed by the bureaux heads, but ex-corporate managers are not even a majority. The Karunii selected "leading citizens", and that included admirals, nobles, priests, and scientists.

Archduke Ishuggi "lost" Corridor when Lucan withdrew its fleet. He "lost" Dagudashag when Lucan's lieutenants used force to take over its administration illegally while fighting Dulinor and Strephon. Gushemege's nobility has always snubbed Vland, because they resent Vland's historic authority. Their support of the "real" Strephon was predictable: when given a chance to behave in an unorthodox manner, Gushemege has often done so.

It is likewise foolish to charge that the Vilani abandoned Corridor and Lishun to save themselves. It was Lucan who transferred the Corridor and Lishun fleets. Archduke Ishuggi attempted to form new squadrons to relieve Corridor by demothballing ships, but Lucan diverted even those ships to replace losses in Zarushagar.

When Vland declared the new Ziru Sirka, unoccupied Lishun Sector sided with it. However, attrition and steady pressure by the Vargr finally forced a general retirement from Lishun in 1119, almost to the Vland/Lishun sector boundary.

Archduke Ishuggi remains committed to the common good of all sophonts. His scope of action, however, is limited to his own domain. The Igsiirdi Council backs the Vargr trade program. Outright hostilities to reconquer the terrritories would do more harm than good, but the Ziru Sirka aims to improve the lot of the conquered sectors.

Do the ways we seek to restore exist only in Vilani minds? The Vilani established the first interstellar empire, and it lasted the longest of any yet. The Third Imperium united only areas already civilized by the Vilani. The ramshackle Rule of Man scarcely ruled at all: it never consolidated its position. Who then was most successful?

The Vilani absorbed many races into their culture. The Rule of Man emphasized (as the Zhodani and the Solomani today still emphasize) racial dominance. The Third Imperium practiced the same racial-oriented policies until after the Civil War. Which of the major human races, then, is truly the most tolerant?

Terra withdrew into its own system in the Long Night, but no world on the Vilani Main lost interstellar travel. The Vilani have shown far greater staying power than any Solomani-oriented rule.

The shot has been fired and the flyers of the rebellion have begun the contest — should one bet on the garu or the kankurur?•

(The Vilani legend is told of two flying creatures — the large, swift kankurur, and the small, slow garu. According to legend, the gods staged a long-distance flying contest to see which of the two creatures would be given the honor of a constellation in the heavens. The over-confident kankurur wasted his time showing off his great flying skill to the gods by flying to great heights, swooping, and trying to win favor by exhibiting his great ability. Meanwhile, the garu quietly flew the distance as prescribed by the gods, and won the contest. So the garu was given a bright, impressive constellation in the night skies of Vland, while the kankurur has no constellation whatsoever in his honor. —Ed.)

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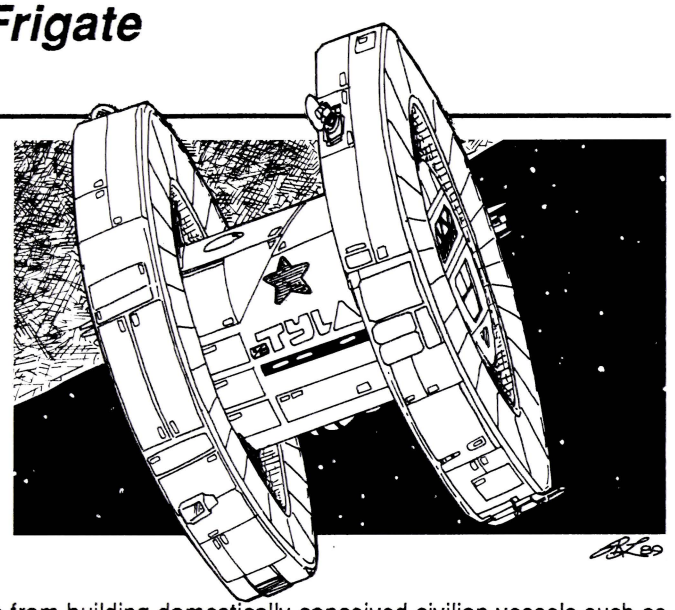
The Tula-Class Frigate

—By Mark Galeotti



The main Russian design bureaux (OKBs) of Gulushin, Korolev, and Morokov were invited to tender proposals to a committee chaired jointly by senior officials of the Bureau of Industry and the Space Navy Logistics Command. Gulushin presented the *Alexander Nevsky*, a militarised variant of their *Maxim*; Morokov offered an advanced patrol cruiser known as the *Red Star* which incorporated a number of leading-edge design features; and Korolev suggested a far more modest frigate, the *October* class.

The *Red Star* emerged as favored candidate in 2290, but it soon became clear that, far from providing a basis for the development of Russian space industries, it was far too ambitious. Projected service dates began to slip further and further towards the horizon. The Navy had been fighting a running battle with the Bureau of Industry to keep the project alive, but once it became clear that it would take over a decade even to get the prototype in service they transferred their allegiances to a more realistic course.

Although the Bureau of Industry favored the *Alexander Nevsky* due to its use of established and proven technologies, a compromise was reached based around the *October*, soon renamed the *Tula* class, as the best balance between realism and national aspirations.

The *Tula* design is one of the clearest manifestations of the RSFR's long-standing conviction that its just place is among the superpowers, and of its vivid national memories of past glories and military strength. After years of license-producing — or more usually, adding the finishing touches to — French warship designs, the Russian government finally decided in 2288 to develop an indigenous military vessel. The naval shipyards at Moscow Trinity orbital docks had long been involved in the fitting and modification of the Fleet's ships and it seemed a logical step from building domestically conceived civilian vessels such as the *Maxim* long-haul transport to the launching of an all-Russian warship.

The design priorities and constraints revolved around the divisive issue of pragmatism versus ambition. Pragmatism dictated the use of reliable but venerable license-built French engines and stutterwarps rather than more expensive modern equipment, and a simple synthetic hull. On the other hand the military authorities, only too well aware of the few maintenance and refuelling facilities open to them and the indifferent speeds the old drive units could attain, were prepared to sacrifice firepower for endurance. This was less because there was a real need for long-range patrols than because of a perception that the Russian Fleet would ultimately need ships able to operate without the elaborate infrastructure which supported its colonial rivals.

The result was a light frigate able to cruise for a month between refuelling and with no less than 6 months' life support. The problem was that this involved some three-quarters of the hull being devoted to fuel tankage. Considering how rarely non-colonial Russia would need to send her fleets out on such an odyssey, this seemed too high a price to pay.

The eventual solution was crude and simple, but it met the *Tula*'s needs. Sufficient hull space was set aside to fuel the ship for two weeks' operation. When a *Tula* was expected to need longer endurance, an inflatable drogue could be attached to the rear of this ship, containing up to another 4 weeks' supply. This disposable synthetic-and-polymer 'spare tank' provides endurance at the expense of a dramatically increased signature, significant degradation in performance, and a very ungainly and cumbersome profile. The correct tactical usage, then, is for the ship to use drogue fuel first, jettisoning the tank once it is empty. Similarly the tank is jettisoned if the ship is likely to become involved in a combat situation.

The hull is a simple spin hull massing 1,418t and with a volume of 3,114m3 (3,096m3 internal space, 18m3 hull). An 11m diameter core 17.7m long houses the bulk of the fuel and engineering systems, with command and life stations in two rings 2.5m deep mounted on three pylons each, out to a 20m diameter spin radius, both 4m 'long' (each with an internal volume of 706m3). The hull spin provides artificial gravity necessary to the crew for extended duration patrols. Flywheels are used to start and stop the spin for docking.

The stutterwarp is an aging French 2-megawatt design, license-built as the Litvinov-2211-x-34. This produces a respectable drive efficiency of 1.8 but with a full drogue tank (2,000t) this falls to 1.3. This is the minimum the Russian navy was prepared to accept, so space and tonnage have been sacrificed for a power plant able to keep the drive at full strength even when the lasers and active sensors were in use during combat. Hence the selection of a 5-megawatt MHD turbine.

The *Tula* is only lightly armed, with two French Guiscard LL-98s, purchased in kit form and assembled in orbit. They are mounted in single turrets, each twinned with TTA, on opposite 'sides' of the vessel, one each on the two rings. This is only light armament, though, so a fairly modern RSK-3836 fire control computer was installed as part of the command suite to maximize their effectiveness. The real teeth of the *Tula*, though, are the 6 Silka attack missiles in a bay at the front of the core, each packing a 5x2 detonation laser.

The vessel is equipped with both active and passive military sensors, the P-L6 "Zerkalo" (Mirror) passive array and the more widely used K-M91 "Gorizont" (Horizon) active sensors.

The *Tula* carries a maximum crew of 36, including a squad of 12 Orbital Marines, and has a total of 6 months' life support. A small specialized recreation center was included to improve

conditions for the crew on long hauls. The presence of the Marines may seem an unlikely feature for a non-colonial power to require in a ship, but three considerations lay behind the provision of troop quarters. One is that if the ship is to make any use of its endurance, it will have to use many foreign facilities and this poses security problems not encountered in the colonial powers' navies. In addition, the long-ranged *Tula* is a logical choice to use for official visits and the provision of 12 extra berths allows for some flexibility - a six man official party, for example, in more spacious accommodation. The third factor is that on long journeys the marine contingent can be omitted and their space used for the rest of the crew, bringing the total accommodation to about 40m3 per crewman. Quarters, though spartan, are kept at 1G through the hull spin, and extensive facilities for the use of recreational tapes and games are provided to try to alleviate the psychological consequences of long journeys.

Crew

The *Tula* has a crew of 24 plus 12 Orbital Marines. There are a total of 16 work stations: 6 on the bridge, 5 in the Tactical Action Centre, 3 devoted to monitoring the engineering functions, one in the Sick Bay and one at the disposal of the marine detachment.

Personnel	Station	Rank	Where?
Captain	Command Station	Captain	Bridge
First Officer	"	1st Lt	"
Navigation Officer	Astrogation	1st Lt	"
Second Nav. Officer	"	Ensign	"
Signals Officer	Communications	Ensign	"
Asst. Signals Officer	"	1/Crew	"
Helmsman	Helm	2nd Lt	"
Asst. Helmsman	"	Cadet	"
First Computer Officer	Comp-1	2nd Lt	"
Second Comp. Officer	"	1/Crew	"
Monitor Officer	Comp-2	2nd Lt	"
Second Monitor	"	Cadet	"
Station Engineer	Eng-1	2nd Lt	Engineering
Damage Ctrl Engineer	"	1/Crew	"
Station Mech-Engineer	Eng-2	2/Crew	"
Dmge Ctrl Mech-Engineer	"	2/Crew	"
Station Electroengineer	Eng-3	1/Crew	"
Dmge Ctrl Electroengineer	"	2/Crew	"
Sensor Officer	Active	1/Crew	TAC
Sensor Officer	Passive	1/Crew	"
Fire Ctrl Officer	Laser/1	Ensign	"
Fire Ctrl Officer	Laser/2	Ensign	"
Fire Ctrl Officer	Missiles	Ensign	"
Medical Officer	Medic	Ensign	Sick Bay
Platoon Commander	Ship's Troops	Ensign	Troop B
Platoon Sergeant	"	Sgt	"
First Soldier (2)	"	1st Sldr	"
Trooper (8)	"	Marine	"

The total establishment is, therefore, a Captain, two 1st Lieutenants, four 2nd Lieutenants, six Ensigns, two Cadets, six Crewmen 1st Class, and three Crewmen 2nd Class, along with a Marine Ensign, a Marine Sergeant, two 1st Soldiers and eight Marine Privates. This is quite officer-heavy, in keeping with Russian practices which regard most significant functions as officers' duties and tend to promote able non-coms swiftly into the ranks of the officers.

One computer station —the Monitor's Comp-2 —also doubles as a command station for the drogue tank when one is used and controls the explosive decoupling bolts which would jettison it before combat.

Vessels In Service

Number	Name	Constructed	Status
VC-201	Tula	2298	1st St. Basil Home Stars Squadron
VC-206	Yaroslavl	2298	1st St. Basil Home Stars Squadron
VC-207	Smolensk	2299	3rd Iron New Stars Squadron
VC-211	Kazan	2301(proj)	2nd Leningrad Home Stars Squadron
VC-216	Borovichi	2302(proj)	1st St. Basil Home Stars Squadron

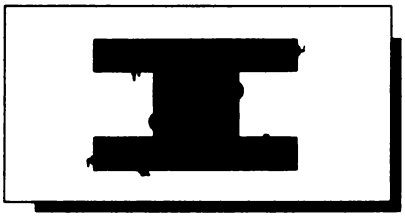
STANDARD DATA

Dimensions:
Length: 18m
Width: 23m maximum
Height: 23m maximum
Tonnage: 418t empty, 1418 t fully fueled
Volume: Core: 1,808m3, 2 rings: 1,288m3
Armament:
2x LL-98 laser weapons in single turrets, one mounted on each ring
6x *Silka* Attack Missiles in single bay at bow with single remote pilot station
Electronics:
Ruka-4611 Navigation Sensors
PL-6 *Zerkalo* Passive Array
K-M91 *Gorizont* Active Sensor System
RSK-3836 Fire Control System
Engineering Systems:
Power Plant: 5MW Mozhno-Puli 2j4u MHD turbine
Fuel: 2000t (3,300m3)
Drive: 2MW Litvinov-2211-x-34 Stutterwarp
Signature:
Maximum Radial Area: 415m2
Lateral Area: 280m2
Cost: MLvs 17.039 (includes 6 missiles

HULL DESIGN

Component	Volume(m3)
Powerplant	70
Stutterwarp	16
Drogue	10
Sensors, Nav	5
Sensors, Act	10
Sensors, Pass	10
Missile Bay	72
Fire Control	1
Work Sts, Bridge	48
Work Sts, TAC	40
Work Sts, Eng	24
Work Sts, Troop	8
Work Sts, Med	8
Crew Accom	900
Rec Area	78
Life Support	32
Gyros	13
Fuel	1,650
Cargo Bay	100
Cargo Bracing	1
Total	**3096**

Ship Status Sheet



KO-20 TULA
Ship Name

Frigate
Ship Type

RSFR
Owning Nation or World

Movement	4	Radial Reflected	5	Radial Profile	0
Screens	0	Lateral Reflected	4	Lateral Profile	-1
Radiated Signature	4	Targetting Computer	+1	Armor	0

Hull Hits

Minor
Major

Power Plant Hits

Inoperable

Surface Fixture Hits

—Weapons—

1. x 1
2. x 1
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.

—TTAs and Submunitions—

1. TTA
2. TTA
3. Communicator
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
21.
22.

—Active Sensors— 7

Primary
Redundant

—Passive Sensors— 5

Primary
Redundant

Critical Hits

—Computer—

Primary

—Life Support—
—Drive—
—Hangar Deck—
—Missile Bay—
—Continuous—

—Tactical Action Center—

Active Operator — Missile
Passive Operator
Laser -1
Laser -2

—Bridge—

Captain — Engineer
Navigator — Computer -1
Communications — Computer -2

Damage Control

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Ordnance

(record ordnance load and type)

6 x 'SILKA' Missile

Crew

Comfort: 0

Crew Quality:

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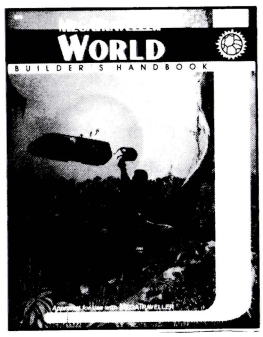

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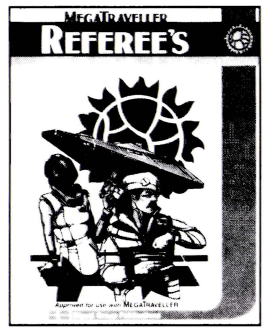

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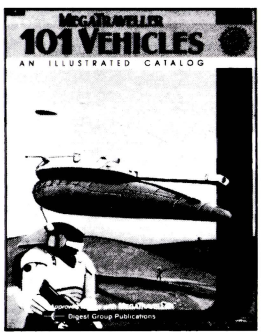

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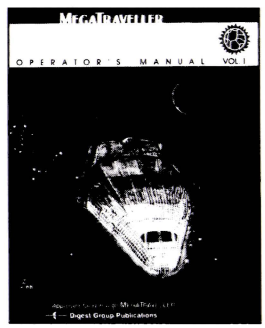

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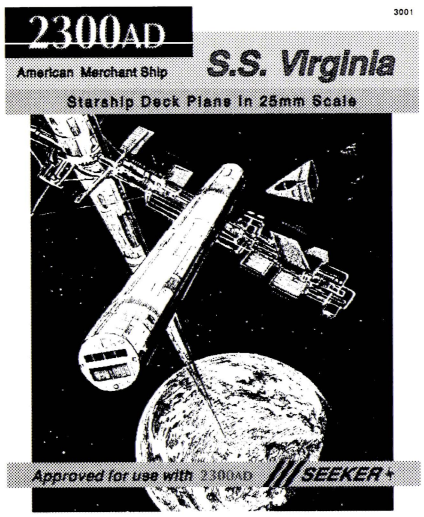

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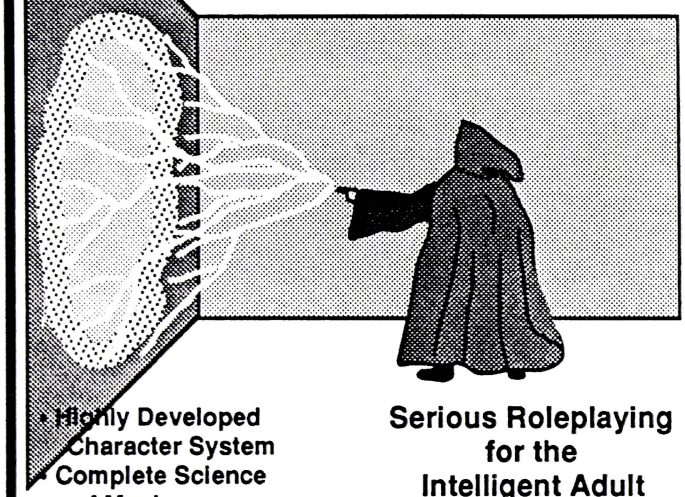

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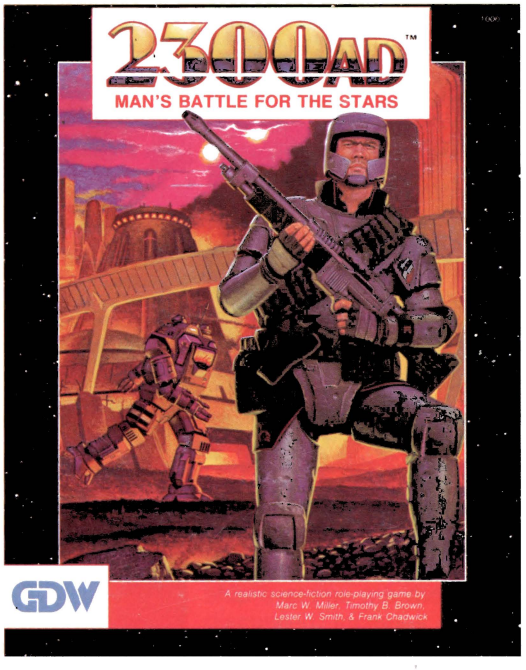

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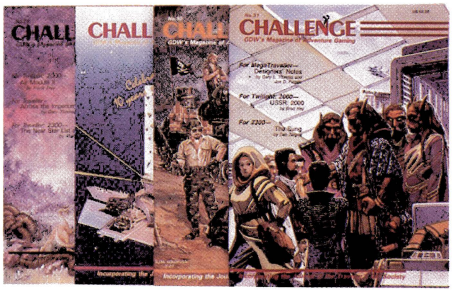

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